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ABSTRACT

What is needed to help children succeed at high levels is already known, and that vision and commitment are essential to bring about reform efforts that research has already established as effective. Conditions that contribute to academic success and well being include nurturing and supportive families, economically and socially healthy neighborhoods, and effective public service systems. Although researchers have developed an understanding of the practices that produce these conditions, the country is currently doing very little to finance them. Even though it is widely recognized that services must be more community-based, flexible, family focused, asset-based, and comprehensive, most services are in fact fragmented, categorical, reactive, deficit-oriented, and remote from the real needs they should meet. It will take substantial public sector investments or redeployments of funding to create the needed new services and opportunities. It will take new vision at the national level as well as at state and local levels to secure these needed investments. (Contains four tables.) (SLD)

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Realizing a Vision for Children, Families, and Neighborhoods:

An Alternative to Other Modest Proposals

Charles Bruner
With foreword by
Douglas Nelson
Commentary by
Otis Johnson

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We will find neither national purpose nor personal satisfaction in a mere continuation of economic progress, in an endless amassing of worldly goods. We cannot measure national spirit by the Dow Jones Average, nor national achievement by the gross national product. For the gross national product includes air pollution and advertising for cigarettes, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors, and jails for the people who break them. The gross national product includes the destruction of the redwoods, and the death of Lake Superior. It grows with the production of napalm and missiles and nuclear warheads. ... It includes Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the broadcasting of television programs which glorify violence and sell goods to our children.

And if the gross national product includes all this, there is much that it does not comprehend. It does not allow for the health of our families, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It is indifferent to the decency of our factories and the safety of our streets alike. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of public officials... the gross national product measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile; and it can tell us everything about America--except whether we are proud to be Americans.

--Robert F. Kennedy, 1967

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About the Working Paper

This policy paper was originally prepared as one of four papers presented at the *Carter Center Leadership Symposium on Community Strategies for Children and Families: Promoting Positive Outcomes* on February 14 - 16, 1996. The Symposium was sponsored by the Carter Center Mental Health Program, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and the Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida. The postscript and commentary to the paper were added as a response to some of the discussion at that Symposium. The proceedings from the overall Symposium also have been published and are available through the sponsoring organizations.

This paper represents ongoing work being undertaken by the Child and Family Policy Center under a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to support the work of the National Center for Service Integration. Although federal funding for NCSI has ended, the Child and Family Policy Center is maintaining the National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse, which continues to publish and disseminate materials on comprehensive, community-based reform strategies designed to be useful to the field in taking action and furthering dialogue.

The opinions expressed in this policy paper are those of the authors, however, and do not necessarily reflect those of NCSI or the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

About the Authors

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Otis Johnson is executive director of the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA) in Savannah, Georgia. Dr. Johnson was a member of the Study Group on School-Linked Integrated Services, sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, which contributed to the publication, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (1993). Elected twice to the Savannah City Council, Dr. Johnson resigned that post and a tenured faculty position at Savannah State College to become executive director of the YFA in 1988.

About the National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse

The National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse publishes and disseminates a variety of publications designed to assist efforts in the field to develop more comprehensive, community-based systems of services and supports to children and families.

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Table of Contents

Foreword
by Douglas Nelson i

Synopsis iii

Chapter I
Where We Are 1

Chapter II
Dimensions of the Problem 5

Chapter III
Developing a Vision for Success 12

Chapter IV
Roles in Implementation 38

Postscript 56

Commentary
by Otis Johnson 59

Foreword

by Douglas Nelson

In the pages that follow, Charles Bruner has crafted a painstakingly evidenced argument that concludes in a sharp challenge to those of us who consider ourselves proponents of fundamental reform on behalf of disadvantaged children. His intent is not to offer up a distinctly original analysis of the problems that confront at risk kids and families, nor to persuade us of wholly novel ways of approaching those problems. Instead, he unrelentingly reminds us of just what it is we already do know, and of the moral and political obligations that come with that knowledge.

At the heart of Bruner's essay is his contention that we can already identify and define the pivotal social, economic, service, and institutional characteristics of communities which are capable of nurturing successful families and producing positive outcomes for kids. Moreover, he convincingly asserts that the last decade of research, experimentation, policy analysis, practice innovation and system reform demonstrations have taught us a great deal about how to re-establish these family-supporting characteristics in the severely challenged communities that are now the source of a disproportionate share of all the rotten outcomes visited upon American children. Bruner concludes his fundamental case by reminding us of the available cost analysis methods that appear to prove that it is more affordable to invest aggressively in what we currently know about community transformation than it is to continue to stand back and absorb the vast human and economic costs of deepening community collapse.

In framing these summary conclusions, it may be that Bruner has overstated the collective wisdom, insight and strategic knowledge that he claims we should have acquired by now; and it may also be that he underestimates the race and class obstacles to the ambitious change agenda he articulates. But these qualifications notwithstanding, there are certain key assertions here about which Bruner is dead right. He is correct in saying the emerging reform movement for kids and families has as yet failed to make the effort to integrate its ideas,

findings, and values into a coherent and complete vision. He is right in suggesting that we have even failed to translate what we know and believe into formulations and into networks that would enlist real engagement from grassroots constituencies, the public, and political leaders. Finally, he has correctly charged the reform advocates with failing to project a level of urgency or leadership that the depth of the kids and family crisis in America demands.

Charles Bruner is the most acute listener and the most tireless analyst within the growing cadre of activists committed to change for disadvantaged families and kids. For the past ten years he has observed us all thinking, learning, evaluating, and concluding about what can and ought to be done to change the future for poor children. In this characteristically low key essay, he modestly but unmistakably begins to call our bluff; he urges us to do something.

Synopsis

The argument presented in the paper, "Realizing a Vision for Children, Families, and Neighborhoods," is a simple one.

First, things are getting serious. The well-being of children in America, particularly children of color and children residing within disinvested neighborhoods, is worsening.

Second, we know what it takes for children to succeed at high levels. The conditions contributing to success include nurturing and supportive families, economically and socially robust neighborhoods, and effective public service systems. We have sufficient knowledge of the essential conditions for high rates of success to take concerted actions to produce them.

Third, we have developed an increased understanding of what practices can produce these conditions, but we currently are doing very little to finance them. Although we recognize the need for services and supports to be more community-based, flexible, family-focused, asset-based, and comprehensive, most of the services we fund are fragmented, categorical, reactive, deficit-oriented, and remote from the lives of those they are designed to serve and help.

Fourth, it will take much more substantial public sector investments or redeployments of funding to create the needed new services, supports, and opportunities to produce significantly higher levels of success among our most vulnerable children and families.

Finally, it will take a new vision at the national level, as well as state and local levels, to secure these needed investments. It will require a much broader and deeper base of support at the grassroots level to carry them out. This challenge can only be met if reformers -- at the policy, administration, and grassroots practice levels and from the government, foundation, corporate, program, and organizing worlds -- work together to develop and implement this vision.

Chapter I
Where We Are

It has been eight years since the publication of Lisbeth Schorr's *Within Our Reach; Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, a book rightfully praised as offering new hope for reforming human services and improving children's lives.[1] During that same period,

- the Gross National Product (GNP) has increased by 48.0%;
- the Dow Jones Industrial Average has risen by more than 170%;
- the country has elected a "change" President with a personal belief in government's role in helping kids;
- the country has chosen "change" again (this time accompanied by a Contract with America); and
- many indicators of child well-being have deteriorated.

According to a national Kids Count report, for instance, between 1987 and 1993 the percentage of babies born at low birthweight has increased 4.3%; births to single teens (per 1000 15-19 year-old women) have risen 32.4%; juvenile violent crime arrests (per 100,000 youths aged 10-17) have increased 54.5%; the percentage of children living in poverty has grown 10.0%; and the percentage of families headed by a single parent has risen 26.9%.[2] The past eight years is a tale of two trends; the gap between those with and those without has widened dramatically, particularly for children and based disturbingly on the color of their skin.

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[1] Schorr, Lisbeth (with Daniel Schorr). *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*. New York: Anchor Press, 1988.

[2] Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Kids Count: A Pocket Guide on America's Youth 1995*. Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995. The figures for child abuse and neglect are even more striking. According to the Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (which seeks to determine underlying, as opposed to reported, rates of abuse and neglect), the number of physically abused children rose by 102% and the number of sexually abused children rose by 126% between 1986 and 1993. See: Summary Document of the Findings of NIS-3 under DHHS Contract No. 105-91-1800. Rockville, MD: Westat, Inc., 1996.

While programs highlighted in *Within Our Reach* have helped spawn much additional activity and reform, that reform largely has occurred at the margins of our country's public systems, rather than into their core. A new service mantra -- comprehensive, flexible, community-based, family-focused, consumer-driven, asset-based -- often has been embraced rhetorically within the public sector, but it largely has been implemented in small-scale demonstration projects with "milk money" public or philanthropic funds. Reformers and practitioners have been enthusiastic about their individual gains and the promise that their efforts hold, while at the same time painfully aware that their successes are fighting against much larger trends.

At the political level, this reform work still is seen as anecdote, not antidote. A revealing survey of state legislative leaders conducted by the State Legislative Leaders' Foundation found that, while legislative leaders sense that children are in need, they have little idea of what is expected of them to address that need or where state government has a role and responsibility. They are unfamiliar with the presence of a child advocacy community that either might help them develop a response or hold their feet to the fire if they do not.[3]

While child advocates have spoken out against federal budget cutbacks and the potential damage done to children by deconstructing the existing system, it is clearly stop-gap work to defend a status quo that has contributed to the current "rotten outcomes"[4] children too frequently experience. The federal system of programs for children existing at the beginning of 1995 was complex, fragmented, and categorical -- and often inflexible and paternalistic. Federal policies and funding streams helped reinforce and perpetuate a "mismatch

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[3] The study was the result of more than 150 in-depth interviews with state legislative leaders, principally Speakers of the House, Presidents of the Senate, and majority and minority leaders in both chambers. See: Blood, Margaret. *Keys to Effective Legislation for Children and Families*. Centerville, MA: State Legislative Leaders Foundation, 1995.

[4] Lisbeth Schorr draws this term from a seminar conducted by Mary Jo Bane, then at the Kennedy School of Government, which urges that more attention be paid to American adolescents experiencing a set of "rotten outcomes" -- having children too soon, leaving school illiterate and unemployable, and committing violent crimes. *Within Our Reach*, *op. cit.*, p. xvii. The term will be used throughout this paper to refer to a variety of both child and youth outcomes that are recognized as damaging both to the individual and to society.

between the typical characteristics of families in need and the characteristics of mainstream service system responses."[5] At the same time, there is no clear, compelling national vision for what could be, or what strategies might lead us there. One thing, however, is clear, and that is that simply "muddling along" is neither possible nor good enough.

This paper suggests new roles and responsibilities for all of us engaged in reform -- practitioners and policy wonks, public administrators and philanthropists, professionals and publicists, political organizers and their publics -- in constructing and implementing such a vision. It is based upon a belief that we cannot sit back and wait for the pendulum to swing favorably in our direction. We must help exert downward pressure on that pendulum. Further, we must be more prescient in addressing roadblocks and the "devil in the

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[5] There are numerous critiques of the current system of services and supports offered to families. This quote is taken from an essay by Doug Nelson, which begins:

> Over the past decade, critical reflection on the state of human services has given rise to a growing consensus on both what's wrong with the way services are provided to at-risk families and children and the essential elements of a system of practice that presumably would work much better. It has, for example, become common among reform-minded analysts to use the descriptions "fragmented," "reactive," "categorical," "inaccessible," "arbitrary," and "unrelated to actual needs" as a means of explaining the failure of existing helping systems to have their hoped-for impact on outcomes for at-risk children and their parents. At the same time, confidence has grown dramatically in the ability of "preventive," "flexible," "family-centered," "collaborative," "intensive," and "individualized" services to make a real difference in the lives and prospects of those who benefit from them."

Nelson, Douglas, "The Role of Training and Technical Assistance in The Promotion of More Effective Services for Children," in Schorr, Lisbeth, Deborah Both, and Carol Copple, eds. *Effective Services for Young Children: Report of a Workshop.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1991, p. 80.

The fragmented nature of federal funding streams is described by Cheryl Hayes as follows:

> Over the past decade and a half, the number of categorical programs serving children and families exploded from approximately 300 in 1980 (before the Reagon block grants) to just under 500 in 1994. As an example, over 90 separate federal programs, administered by 11 agencies ... support services for very young children and their families. Many of these programs have similar or overlapping purposes, although they may target different populations, use different eligibility criteria, and provide a different mix of supports and services to children and their families.

Hayes, Cheryl. *Rethinking Block Grants: Toward Improved Intergovernmental Financing for Education and Other Children's Services.* Washington, DC: The Finance Project, 1995, pp. 15, 16.

details" in guiding and implementing reform when the pendulum does swing. In short, we must do more than we are doing now, and we must be more concerted in doing it together.

Chapter II
Dimensions of the Problem

There is growing recognition that too many children in America are experiencing "rotten outcomes." This country, its economy, and its families are failing to provide sufficient support to too many children for them to develop and achieve reasonable aspirations.

Perhaps the best framing of this problem is through raising a simple question: *How can we succeed with children that current systems fail?*[6] It is strategic -- focusing attention not simply on the problem, but on the need for developing a solution. It focuses upon insuring a minimum standard of success for children, about which society has an acknowledged responsibility. While ultimately outcome-based, it does not presume that we have the answer.

As Kids Count (as well as other state and national child-based data-watches) has shown, the trends in the well-being of children on a number of dimensions are quite disturbing. While some of these have undergone dramatic increases in the last eight years, they are largely part of longer-term trends. Two of these -- the increase in the rates of unprepared and single-parenting[7] and the increase in the number of

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[6] I first heard the question framed this way by Ralph Smith at a meeting sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1993.

[7] On adolescent parenting trends, it is well-recognized by the public that there has been a long-term increase in births to unmarried adolescents as a proportion of all births, dating back to the 1950's. Until recently, this trend has been a reflection of two factors – the decline in the likelihood that adolescents who bear children will be married and the decline in the birth rate among older women. Contrary to popular belief, it has not occurred because teens are more likely to give birth. In fact, the birthrate among 15-19 year-old women declined from 1970 (68.3 per 1000 females) to 1978 (51.4) and remained relatively constant until 1987 (50.6). Between 1987 and 1991, however, the birthrate has risen dramatically (22.7%), although the last two years have shown a modest decline (from 62.1 in 1991 to 59.6 in 1993). See: Public Health Service. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 44, No. 3 Supplement. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1995, Table 4.

On trends in residing within distressed neighborhoods, the Committee for Economic Development reports an increase in the population of this country's 100 largest cities residing in distressed neighborhoods from 1 million in 1970 to 5.7 million in 1990, with the population

children residing in distressed and disinvested environments -- while controversial in their interpretation,[8] serve as a synthesis of the challenges facing America and deserve particular discussion. Two tables are provided here to illustrate why these conditions are particularly challenging to children.

Unprepared Parenting

First and best recognized, children are increasingly likely to be raised, during at least part of their childhood, within a single-parent home, particularly in the critical early years of life. The increase in single-parenting is a long-term societal trend with adverse consequences to children, both because of the greater economic jeopardy of single-parent households and generally fewer supports for their children.[9]

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in distressed neighborhoods from 1 million in 1970 to 5.7 million in 1990, with the population in those distressed neighborhoods now constituting 11.1% of all city residents. Research and Policy Committee. *Rebuilding Inner-City Communities: A New Approach to the Nation's Urban Crisis*. New York: Committee for Economic Development, 1995, pp. 10-11.

[8] The statement of the problems facing society -- the increase in unprepared parents through adolescent and single childbearing and the dangers of growing up in disinvested and distressed communities -- are fairly broadly shared. Although Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray choose to focus upon I.Q. instead of education, much of their assessment of current trends and conditions in childbearing and their implications -- if changes are not made -- are quite similar to those presented here. While they treat I.Q. as somewhat immutable and innate, however, education is acquired. See: Herrnstein, Richard, and Charles Murray. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: Free Press, 1994.

In a different vein, Doug Besharov and Karen Gardiner provide very similar data on the contribution that unprepared (adolescent and uneducated) parenting and living in deeply impoverished neighborhoods make to this country's welfare problem, as well as a critique of voluntary, family supportive reform efforts to affect these trends. They pose reform alternatives that are less extreme than Herrnstein's and Murray's, but which largely rely upon prescription. See: Besharov, Douglas and Karen Gardiner, "Paternalism and Welfare Reform," *The Public Interest* (Winter, 1996), pp. 1-15. Their analysis presents an empirical critique of family support approaches that is worth reviewing. As will be discussed later, however, this argument is based upon experiences to date, rather than what might be.

[9] For a balanced treatment of the causes and consequences of single parenting and the potential role of policy in addressing this issue, see: McLanahan, Sara and Gary Sandefur. *Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Further, it long has been recognized statistically that parental education is one of the strongest determinants of child success.[10] Less-educated women are more likely to bear children and to do so at younger ages and with less likelihood of a spouse's support. However effective our education, human services, and other systems are, they face continuing challenges merely to keep society in the same position it is today, given the different birthrates and likelihood of marriage for women with different educational backgrounds.

Table One provides 1992 data on children born to women by age, educational attainment, and marital history. When coupled with similar data for women age 35-44, Table One has a sober message: that we are producing four generations of children raised by high school dropouts for each three generations of children raised by college graduates; that their family size is larger by a factor of three to two; and that they are much less likely to be married and receive

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[10] A comprehensive, statistical analysis of the correlates of different outcomes for children as they reach adulthood is found in: Haveman, Robert and Barbara Wolfe. *Succeeding Generations: On the Effects of Investments in Children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1994. They conclude:

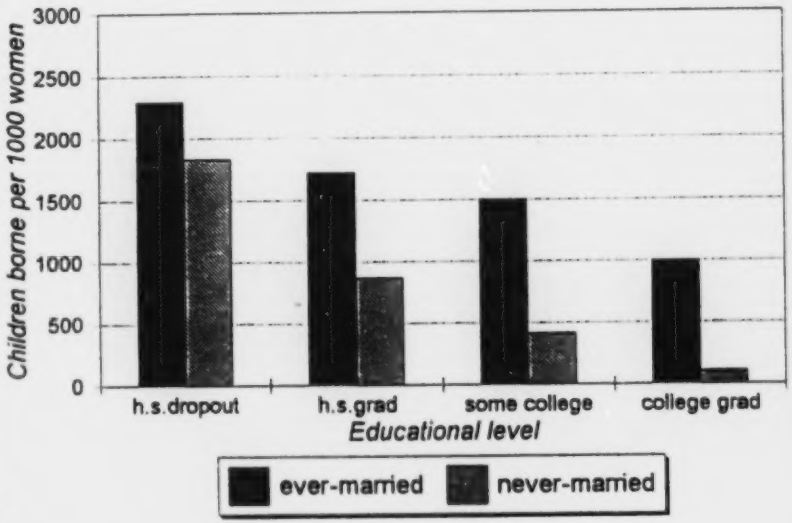
> The most robust -- and the strongest -- finding concerns the effects of the education of the parents on the children that we have studied. For all of the outcomes, more years of parental schooling are associated with greater success and attainments....
>
> Moreover, the effect of additional parental education appears to be more important at the bottom end of the distribution of parental educational levels than at the top. If we undertake the mental experiment of bringing all parents (or mothers) without a high-school diploma to matriculation, holding all of the other variables included in the estimates constant, the national high-school dropout rate would be cut in half, the number of years of schooling of the nation's children would increase by about 4 percent, the rate of teenage nonmarital births would be halved, and the incidence of inactivity of youths in their mid-twenties would be reduced by one-quarter. (pp. 251-2).

Haveman and Wolfe also found some effects from living in distressed neighborhoods and communities on these same measures of child success in entering adulthood. They were statistically significant and very strong for graduation and statistically significant and moderately strong for years of schooling.

Several researchers have identified the mother's educational attainment level as being the most important of family background variables in determining the life chances of children. For a discussion of this research, see: Berlin, Gordon, and Andrew Sum. *Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families, and Our Economic Future*. (Occasional Paper 3: Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future). New York: Ford Foundation, 1988. See page 35 and notes.

Table One

Childbearing by 25- to 34-year-old U.S. Women, by Educational Level, 1992



two consistent sources of social and economic support.[11] While these figures do not mean that society is going backward educationally, it does mean that we are facing continuing challenges to raise educational aspirations and attainment for a large portion of children

[11] These materials are taken from: U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports Series P-20-470. *Fertility of American Women: June 1992.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992. A similar table for 35-44 year-old U.S. women shows larger family sizes, with ever-married high school drop-outs having 2.8 children and ever-married college graduates having 1.7 children. Not only do ever-married college graduates have fewer children; they have them later in life. The four generation to three generation statement is an estimate based upon this information. The CPR also has breakdowns by race and for prior eras. Over the last decade, there has been a very substantial increase in children borne to never-married high school drop-outs.

who come from family backgrounds that have not experienced success in school.[12]

Residing in Disinvested Neighborhoods

Second, the failures our children experience are concentrated, geographically and ethnically. Children who live in seriously distressed neighborhoods have a much heightened risk of failure, across all dimensions of physical, social, psychological, economic, and educational well-being.[13] Table Two provides an illustration from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, where neighborhood mapping showed the different outcomes for children raised in identified "highest risk" neighborhoods with those in other neighborhoods.[14] This is not

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[12] Generally, our society has become better educated over the last two decades, particularly with respect to higher education. This is the result of children exceeding their parents in educational attainment. As these children become parents, the educational level of mothers giving birth also has risen, although most of the increase has been on the higher end of the educational spectrum. Between 1980 and 1993, live births to mothers with a college diploma increased from 14.0% to 19.2% of all births. Live births to mothers with some college increased from 17.9% to 21.1%. During the same period, however, live births to mothers without a high school diploma declined very slightly, from 23.7% to 22.9%, despite the fact that the economic disadvantage of not having a high school diploma increased substantially over this period. This is another tale of "two trends" in society. Sources: *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, *op. cit.*, Table 18, and U.S. Public Health Service. *Vital Statistics of the United States 1980*, Volume 1, Natality. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981.

[13] Haveman and Wolfe, *op. cit.*, provide correlational evidence that residing in disinvested neighborhoods contributes substantially to experiencing certain "rotten outcomes." Schorr, *op. cit.*, provides a detailed discussion of the interactive effect of "risk factors." As children experience more barriers and risks, their risk increases exponentially. There have been a number of studies to determine how much these relationships are causal and how much they are simply correlational, with some finding more independent effects of residing in distressed neighborhoods than others, particularly in the area of adolescent parenting. See: Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne, Greg Duncan, Pamela Klebanov, and Naomi Sealand, "Do Neighborhoods Influence Child and Adolescent Development?" *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 99 (1993), pp. 353-395 and Crane, Jonathan, "Effects of Neighborhoods on Dropping Out of School and Teenage Childbearing," in Jencks, Christopher and Paul Peterson (eds.) *The Urban Underclass*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1991, pp. 291-320.

[14] The "high risk" neighborhoods were identified by the Allegheny County Futures Committee on the basis of the incidence of certain "outcomes," primarily from the health arena. The data presented here are drawn from a study commissioned by the Futures Committee to explore potential "returns on investment" from investments in Family Centers in those communities.

Table Two

The Status of High-Risk Neighborhoods on Indicators of Child Outcomes & Family Conditions Allegheny County, 1995

	High-Risk Neighborhoods	Other Neighborhoods	Ratio HR:Other
Population	222,865	1,113,585	
Child Population	52,923	229,260	
African American Population	109,489	40,061	
Child Outcomes			
Low Birthweight Babies Percentage	12.6%	5.8%	2.2:1
Child Welfare Services/1000 Children	84.6%	9.8%	8:6:1
Delinquency Petitions/1000 Children	53.0%	8.7%	6.1:0
Violent Offenses/1000 Children	53.0%	8.7%	7.0:1
Teen (15-19) Birthrate	10.8%	2.3%	4.8:1
Family Conditions			
Percent Single Parent Families	59.9%	19.7%	3.1:1
Percent Population Under 6 in Poverty	55.0%	11.1%	5.0:1
Percent 25+ Not High School Graduates	33.2%	18.7%	1.8:1

meant to single Allegheny County out as a site with particularly severe problems,[15] but rather to show the geographic concentration of distress

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Parts of that analysis will be discussed later. Bruner, Charles (with Stephen Scott and Martha Steketee). *Background Paper: Potential Returns on Investment from a Comprehensive Family Center Approach in High-Risk Neighborhoods.* Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1996. This is one of the few, and the most comprehensive, examples of neighborhood-based mapping of child outcomes across different dimensions of well-being. The study was undertaken because of the commitment of the Futures Committee to furthering their own understanding of the needs of these neighborhoods.

[15] The percentage of persons living in distressed neighborhoods in the country's 100 largest cities was 11.1% in 1990. Pittsburgh ranked 28th among those cities, with a rate of 14.4%, with Allegheny County's overall rate well below that for the city of Pittsburgh. See: Kasarda, John D., "Inner City, Concentrated Poverty and Neighborhood Distress, 1970-1990," *Housing Policy Debate 3* (1993), pp. 290-293; and U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Statistical Abstract of*

likely to be found within communities, whether metropolitan or not. Clearly, race and racial segregation (particularly the small proportion of minorities within the "other" neighborhoods) cannot be ignored.

Summary

There are many other statistics that might be cited to demonstrate the challenges to society ahead. Clearly, the last quarter century has seen declines in real wages, increased entry of women into the workforce, and less family time. These all contribute to the general level of demands upon family life and social institutions.[16]

Still, the two issues raised above -- unprepared parenting and neighborhood distress -- go a long way to explaining the dimensions of the challenges raised in seeking to *succeed with children that current systems fail.* Unfortunately, there are no tested, large-scale "solutions" to preparing parents or eliminating neighborhood distress that simply require reasonable diligence in replication. At best, as evidenced in *Within Our Reach* and many subsequent works, we can point to an increasing array of small-scale programs and initiatives, showing promise in the ability to swim against the tide and achieve new results.

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the United States, 1992. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992, Table 38.

[16] Perhaps most challenging in these trends is the overall very slow growth in median family income for families with children, achieved only because families are working more hours, coupled with a dramatic increase in the proportion of affluent families. Between 1970 and 1993, the percentage of families earning over $100,000 (in 1993 dollars) increased from 2% of the population to 6.3%. This represents a politically powerful block of voters and contributors, with a significant portion believing that they can enclave themselves from social concerns and needs experienced by the poor. Meanwhile, working class families have seen real wages decline and are maintaining their standard of living only by working more outside the home, with resulting needs greater needs for child care. For a discussion of the trends in family income since 1995 and their implications to social policy, with a particular emphasis upon the last twenty-five years, see: Iowa Kids Count. *Family Matters.* Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1995.

Chapter III
Developing a Vision for Success

Before we can begin to answer the strategic question, "How can we succeed with children that current systems fail?," it is important to review what we do know about the correlates for such success.

Conditions Needed for Success

I believe that identifying the conditions needed for high levels of child success is done best at the community, and not the individual or family, level.[17] There exists a rich mosaic of research and evidence on what is required within a community for its children to achieve high levels of success. Whether one starts from a specific desired outcome (school completion, responsible use of alcohol and other drugs, responsible sexuality, school readiness) or looks at them as a constellation,[18] a common list of essential underlying conditions emerges -- which is shown in Table Three.

This does not mean that all children raised in communities where these conditions are prevalent will succeed any more than it means that all children raised in communities without them will fail. It does

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[17] Prior to his work with garden peas in discovering the basic laws of heredity, Gregor Mendel first worked to grow better tomatoes. He first selected the finest tomatoes to serve as seeds for the next year's crop. His breakthrough was to move from the selection of individual tomatoes to the selection of tomatoes from plants that generally produced better tomatoes. This move from the individual tomato to the plant as the source of reproduction represented a paradigm shift. Many previous and current reforms seeking to improve outcomes for children, of course, are focusing upon the tomato rather than the plant.

[18] One enumeration of the literature on risk factors and their established relationship to substance abuse, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and violence is reproduced in: Howell, James C. *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, 1995, p. 19. It draws upon the work of Catalano and Hawkins. See: Catalano, Richard, and J. David Hawkins, "The Social Development Model: A Theory of Antisocial Behavior," in Hawkins, J. David, ed. *Some Current Theories of Delinquency*. New York: Cambridge University Press, in press. In the end, it is unlikely that one can achieve high rates of success on one dimension of well-being without also improving success on other dimensions of well-being, the reason the term "constellation" is used here.

Table Three
Conditions Needed for Children to Succeed at High Levels

Safety and Security
- economic and physical security, within the home and neighborhood
- environmental and public safety

Social Support and Resiliency
- a nurturing, stable family environment
- adult mentors and role models in the community
- positive peer activities
- opportunities to exert effort and achieve success

Professional Services and Supports
- health care for medical needs
- decent schools and schooling
- access to professional services to treat any conditions or needs that may arise and require professional care

mean that the absence of any of these conditions puts children at greater risk, with a compounding of risk as fewer of these protections and supports are in place. The prevention literature on "resiliency"[19] makes this case quite well, as do a number of more statistically-based demographic ones. Moreover, it not only is the absence of negative conditions (abuse, neglect, environmental danger) but the existence of positive conditions (nurturing, opportunities to experience growth and receive reinforcement) that are needed for children to succeed at high

[19] An excellent review of the resiliency literature, examining individual, family, and community factors, is found in: Benard, Bonnie. *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School, and Community*. Portland, OR: Far West Laboratory, 1991. Drawing upon this literature, South Carolina has developed a 10-Step program for communities to employ in identifying and addressing causal factors behind adolescent and school readiness concerns. Their list of causal factors is very similar to that provided in Table Three, but also includes the media. See: Neal, James, A. Baron Holmes, and Gaye Christmus. *10 STEPS to School Readiness and Community Prevention of Adolescent Problem Behaviors*. South Carolina Kids Count, October 1993 (revised February 1995).

levels.[20]

This list also makes good common sense, e.g. has strong "face validity." People see these conditions as important pathways to their own successes. Most people point to persons providing stability and nurturing in their lives, mentors holding them to high expectations, and peer activities supporting social norms as key factors in their growth and development. It is not hard to reach agreement that these conditions are needed in order to achieve high levels of child success at a community level.

Many of these conditions, particularly those in the middle of the list, involve the presence of a robust set of natural networks of support within the community. In addition to their appellation as "resiliency" or "protective" factors in the prevention literature, these have been referred to by different writers as "primary services," "social capital," "social mediators," "social buffers," and "core concepts."[21]

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[20] See, for instance: Dunst, Carl and Carole Trivette. *Measuring Family Functioning as an Outcome of Social Action Programs: A Framework and Relevant Indicators*. Philadelphia, PA: Pew Charitable Trusts, nd; and Cowen, Emory, "The Enhancement of Psychological Wellness: Challenges and Opportunities," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1994), pp. 149-179. The British recognize this in their formal child protection system, using the British terminology "high criticism" and "low warmth" environments to characterize parenting styles that place a child at risk. See: Dartington Social Research Unit. *Child Abuse and Child Protection: Recent Research Findings and Their Implications*. Great Britain: Department of Health, 1995.

[21] Chapin Hall discusses these as "primary services." See: Richman, Harold, Joan Wynn, and Joan Costello. *Children's Services in Metropolitan Chicago; Directions for the Future*, Vol. IV. Chicago: The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 1991. Robert Putnam discusses them in the context of "social capital." See: Putnam, Robert, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life," *The American Prospect* (Spring, 1993); and *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. William Julius Wilson discusses the need for "social buffers." See: Wilson, William Julius. *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Connell and Aber speak of the need for "social mediators." See: Connell, James P. and J. Lawrence Aber, "How Do Urban Communities Affect Youth? Using Social Science Research to Inform the Design and Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives," in Connell, James, Anne Kubisch, Lisbeth Schorr, and Carol Weiss, eds. *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 1995. Public/Private Ventures, with a focus on youth development, includes these among its "core concepts" required for youth success. See: Public/Private Ventures. *Community Change for Youth Development (CCYD): Establishing Long-Term Supports in*

Shortcomings of Current Public Responses

It also should be distressingly clear that public strategies, particularly those directed to unprepared parents and within distressed communities, do not address this totality of conditions.[22] The majority of public funding for children and families addresses only the bottom set of conditions on this list, often on the reactive and ameliorative, professional service side. Often, these publicly-funded programs deal with individual needs and problems in isolation from the community conditions that helped to create them. They take paternalistic and self-contained approaches with the families they serve, even when their diagnosis clearly shows the need to address other missing conditions to achieve success. They stress professional-to-client interactions, rather than building self-help and voluntary networks.

Meanwhile, economic development activities generally are viewed from the perspective of the current configuration of economic consumers and producers, rather than the possibility of the emergence of new markets and entrepreneurs within disinvested neighborhoods. At best, development efforts are designed to produce better housing or create new jobs and not to link these efforts with specific activities to create workforce readiness or residential stability. Neighborhood organizing efforts to construct new voluntary networks and "build social capital" to help link families with natural networks of support represent, at best, small and marginal add-ons to the dominant stream of public response. They usually lack the authority or power to leverage responses to the demands from consumers they produce -- on

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Communities for the Growth and Development of Young People. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1993.

[22] In fact, this critique has been the basis for recommendations for reform of public systems from the left, middle, and right. On the perspective from the "responsible" right, as embodied in Empower America and the Project for American Renewal, see: Coats, Dan (with responses from Gertrude Himmelfarb, Don Eberly, and David Boaz), "Can Congress Revive Civil Society?" *Policy Review: The Journal of American Citizenship*, No. 75, (Jan.-Feb., 1996), pp. 24-33. On the perspective from the middle, see: Bradley, Bill, "Civil Society and the Rebirth of Our National Community," *The Responsive Community*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 4-9, and Whitehead, Barbara, "Dan Quayle Was Right," *The Atlantic Monthly* (April, 1993), pp. 47-84. On the perspective from the left, see: Hayden, Tom, "Working the System: Memo to the TIKKUN Community," *TIKKUN*, Vol. 7, No. 6 (Nov.-Dec., 1992), pp. 19-21.

the service, infrastructure (housing), or economic opportunity side.

While the emphasis upon collaboration to address child and family needs has moved from an end vision of "service collaboration" and "service integration" to a broader one of "community collaboration" and "community building," only the first, tentative steps have been taken to make this a reality. When mention is made at a community collaborative that "the real issue is jobs," there often is a collective sigh, depicting an acknowledgement of the truth of the statement and the fact that no one feels they have the power to do anything to address it.

While there is not a consensus on whether public funding can (or should[23]) be used to aid in the construction of many of these conditions, most notably the natural networks of support, I believe we must take on this task to achieve success. Moreover, we must seek to define the role of government and the public sector in a manner that can lead to consensus.

If one accepts the premise that these are the fundamental conditions that must exist to improve community-wide measures of child success, what strategies must be developed to take on this task? Clearly, improving the quality and range of professional service systems, including schools and medical care, is an important part, but only a part, of the answer. The existing system of health, education, and human services is at the bottom of this list of necessary conditions. Merely improving that system, unless that in turn produces improved

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[23] This paper does not directly address the arguments made by those with alternative views on this subject. Clearly, many of the arguments of the fundamentalist right define public entry into this arena as intrusion into family life. Empower America proposes "nonprofitizing" government's response through tax incentives for contributions to organizations dealing with the plight of the poor. In fact, however, it should be noted that government currently does provide funding support and financial incentives for many social activities, through funding for parks and recreation and for extra-curricular school activities and for tax benefits for nonprofit, religious, and philanthropic foundations. A description of the manner in which economic, physical, social, and human capital are publicly supported both for society as a whole and for disinvested neighborhoods is found in Table One (after page 4) of: Bruner, Charles. *Toward Defining Government's Role as Catalyst: Building Social Capital in Disinvested Neighborhoods*, Occasional Paper #16. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1995. That paper discusses possible government roles in building social capital.

voluntary networks in the community, more nurturing parents, and greater economic opportunity (and it can contribute in a significant, but in most cases not primary, way to each) will not be enough.

This returns to the need to more directly address the issues of unprepared parents and distressed and disinvested neighborhoods. Helping parents become prepared and regenerating neighborhoods suggests very differently structured services, supports, and opportunities. Existing systems must pay much more attention to connecting families with a constellation of voluntary networks of support within their communities. They must help to ensure economic opportunity as well as developing job readiness. They must incorporate new, more preventive forms of frontline involvement with families that help socially isolated and stressed families connect with needed supporting networks and build their own capacity to resolve needs and nurture their children.[24]

It is here that lessons from *Within Our Reach* and the many small-scale programs and services that have provided beacons of hope can be of use. They present the building blocks and tools for constructing many of these conditions where they do not exist today.

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[24] In fact, the latter embodies much of what is being developed programmatically under the rubric of family resource centers, family support programs, and home visiting family development work. It also involves the provision of support in a manner that embodies the principles of effective practice – community-based, family-focussed, asset-oriented, comprehensive, individually tailored. Many community collaboratives have developed demonstration programs incorporating these new forms of frontline practice, attempting to better connect with socially isolated and vulnerable families or youth. Usually, collaboratives have implemented these strategies on the basis of common sense, rather than a theoretical construct. This discussion offers some of that theoretical grounding. While there is a value in "learning by doing," particularly if the alternative is "endless planning," bringing reform efforts to scale requires that the dimensions of the need be defined and a broader theoretical construct established, to help ensure that "learning" when "doing" occurs. For one observation on the general absence of a theoretical construct even in a very well-funded reform initiative, see: Walker, Jerry. *Task 5: Goal-Free Evaluation for the Kellogg Youth Initiatives Program Evaluation.* Western Michigan University, MI, The Evaluation Center, 1994. For the value of a theoretical construct in comprehensive reform efforts, see: Weiss, Carol, "Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families," in Connell, James, Anne Kubisch, Lisbeth Schorr, and Carol Weiss (eds.) *New Approaches to Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives, op. cit.*, pp. 65-92.

I believe there are at least four different types of strategic, reform efforts (albeit ones that overlap) to produce these conditions where they do not presently exist. Each must be addressed to ensure that conditions exist for children to succeed at high levels. Each -- new forms of family supportive frontline practice, reconstructing public systems to embrace new principles, building social capital, and creating economic hope and opportunity -- is discussed below.

1. New forms of family supportive frontline practice. The first strategy is the most apparent and familiar to many, coming under the name of family support, youth development, and a variety of prevention-oriented reforms. The family support creed starts with the statement, "All families need support," recognizing universality in the human condition. It goes on to posit a set of ways of working with families who cannot find the support they need within the immediacy of their own lives. While many family support programs have a parent education thrust, the principles of "effective practice" suggest they must be holistic in their approach, partnering with families in setting and reaching family member goals. Experiences from the most promising efforts suggest the need, particularly when working with families whose parents are most unprepared, for frontline workers to be able to address a hierarchy of needs.[25] While the long-term focus may be on child development or family self-sufficiency, first work may involve stabilizing the family and meeting basic needs for housing, food, or safety from attack. Following that stabilization (if the program has the means to secure the necessary outside supports), parental stress and adult needs must frequently be addressed, before developmental work on parent and child issues begin. As the parent or parents begin to see new hope and opportunity, parental hopes and expectations for their child emerge.[26] As families gain more

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[25] The classic presentation of this thesis is found in: Maslow, Abraham. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Row, 1954.

[26] These arguments hold for men as well as women, although the primarily emphasis of many family support programs is on mothers and their children. Engaging or re-engaging fathers in the lives of their children can bring new meaning and hope into their lives, a sense of the future that is tied to making the community a place where children can grow. While it takes concerted work, Ralph Smith, developer of a father's program for the Philadelphia Children's Network, claims, "For young men who often are viewed as pariahs within the communities in which they live, parenting brings with it a unique opportunity to claim a stake in society."

confidence, they seek to connect with others experiencing the same types of growth and to contribute to their community. They become part of those elaborate social ties and bonds that are one of the conditions for a healthy community.[27]

This, of course, represents an exceedingly challenging task for frontline workers -- who must confront and address issues of homelessness, poverty, lack of employment or employability, domestic violence, substance abuse, adult illiteracy, family stress and chaos, and the absence of persons who can be turned to in times of need.[28] At one level, the worker needs the skills and tools that can diagnose needs requiring specialized support and work holistically across the range of human interactions. This requires that programs organize to

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See: Smith, Ralph, "Putting Fathers into Families," *Georgia Academy Journal* (Winter, 1993-4), p. 4.

[27] Several program assessments have tracked the actual steps families take in moving toward self-sufficiency. For analysis from an inner-city welfare reform initiative: Herr, Toby, and Robert Halpern. *Changing What Counts: Re-Thinking the Journey Out of Welfare*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, 1991. For an analysis from a more rural state, see: Bruner, Charles and Megan Berryhill. *Making Welfare Work: A Family Approach*. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1992. For a recent assessment of the actual steps fifty-four families took in moving toward self-sufficiency within a small family support program, see: Bruner, Charles. *Way to Grow: Implementing an Outcome-Based Approach to Evaluating a Family Support Program*, Occasional Paper #17. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1995.

[28] For instance, workers related the following about the 360 families served at eight sites by Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) demonstration grant program, a program designed to serve families at-risk of long-term welfare dependency or instability leading to foster placement:

- o 25% had told the worker they had been childhood victims of physical abuse, and workers suspected an additional 24% were victims but had not told the worker,
- o 26% had told the worker they had been childhood victims of sexual abuse, and workers suspected an additional 28% were victims but had not told the worker,
- o 40% had told the worker they had been raised by at least one alcoholic parent,
- o 16% admitted to current substance abuse and another 24% to past history of substance abuse,
- o 12% had been incarcerated at some point in their history,
- o 25% indicated they were presently in a physically abusive relationship and another 34% that they previously had been in an abusive relationship, and
- o 24% indicated they had abused or neglected their own children in the past.

This did not mean that these issues were always directly addressed in the work that went on with families, but it demonstrates the range and extent of issues that a worker must be prepared to face. See: *Making Welfare Work*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

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support such frontline practice and assure its quality.[29] At a second level, this requires that the worker have access to and the leverage to secure more specialized types of support -- whether these involve "survival services" like housing, an outside service like substance abuse treatment, or a new approach from another frontline worker in the family's life, like a partnership with a teacher in pursuing a behavior management strategy while the child is in the classroom.[30] This frontline work must have some authoritative influence over all professional human service and educational domains.

Very similar arguments regarding frontline work have been made with respect to youth development. Youth need mentoring adults and opportunities to participate and be involved. Effective youth development programs and strategies are asset-based, offer places where youth belong and learn, and bring them in contact with adults with whom they relate and who hold them to high expectations.[31]

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[29] One of the findings from research on "effective frontline approaches" is that workers need to have certain characteristics and skills to be effective, requiring strong supervision and extensive training. For a summary of this literature, see: Kinney, Jill, Kathy Strand, Marge Hagerup, and Charles Bruner. *Beyond the Buzzwords: Key Principles of Effective Practice*. Falls Church, MD: National Center for Service Integration, 1994. See, in particular, Chapter 7, "Worker Characteristics and Skills." This does not mean that paraprofessionals or community workers cannot fill these roles, but they must be carefully recruited and effectively trained. Overall, it may be no cheaper to use paraprofessionals, although it may have substantial benefits to the community. For a discussion of the use of paraprofessionals in one home visiting initiative, see: Halpern, Robert, "Issues in Program Design and Implementation," in Larner, Mary, Robert Halpern, and Oscar Harkavy (eds.) *Fair Start for Children: Lessons Learned from Seven Demonstration Projects*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 179-197.

[30] In fact, this latter point is often missed. A case in point is the school-linked services literature, which tends to see the value of such services as providing a referral point for teachers so that someone else can address the child's non-educational needs. In fact, however, the real value of school-linked services may be in helping the teacher develop better strategies for addressing those non-educational needs when the child is in (and often acting out in) the classroom. For a discussion of this issue, see: Bruner, Charles. *School-Linked Services and the Way Teachers Teach*, Occasional Paper #9. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1994.

[31] Public/Private Ventures, which has worked with youth in employment-related programs, recently developed five core concepts, based upon research and experience, that are needed for youth to succeed:

- o Personal support and guidance from caring adults;
- o Work as a tool for promoting personal development and learning as well as preparation

With respect to both family support and youth development programs, one essential program by-product, if not its stated goal, is the construction of much richer social bonds. Participants not only grow themselves, but serve as supports and guides to others. They congregate, and, ideally, let others in. Family resource centers serve not only as points where families can meet their own needs, but as points of congregation where community-building occurs. Youth activities affect not only participants, but peer group norms and peers who may not themselves participate. In terminology particularly in vogue, they create the "social capital" needed for communities to experience growth.[32]

2. *Reconstructing public systems to embrace new principles.* This brings us to the second strategic element that perhaps is most fundamental to reform within the professional helping world.

While one missing element for many youth and families is the more preventive, holistic frontline practice that serves as a connecting link for families with their networks of support and to professional service needs, there also is a need to fundamentally reform the manner in

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for future employment;

- o Constructive activities that fill critical gap periods and facilitate major transitions;
- o Active youth involvement in program and community activities; and
- o Continuity of attention to these four areas from early adolescence to adulthood.

These relate very well to the resiliency and protective factors outlined earlier. Public/Private Ventures. *Community Change for Youth Development, op. cit.*.

Karen Pittman stresses the need to support the "inner circles" around a youth--family, peer and adult friends, role models, and community organizations--and to work positively toward youth development, voluntarily, informally, with an eye toward developing the whole person. Pittman, Karen. *A Youth-Centered View of Community Supports.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, nd.

[32] See note 21 for a number of formulations, with different scholars using different terms to describe the community networks and social norms that produce a positive environment for growth and development. In addition to these formulations, Frank Riessman and David Carroll have stressed the importance of "self-help" networks and organizations as a significant source of explicitly nonprofessional support for individuals and families, with a need for policy and practice to better integrate "self-help" with professional services and supports. Riessman, Frank and David Carroll. *Redefining Self-Help: Policy and Practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995. The fact that there are so many formulations (with important differences in nuance) suggests the growing recognition of the importance of these factors in producing healthy children, youth, and adults.

which public services respond to families and their needs. One critique of the current system of professional services and supports is that it, in fact, has weakened social responsibility and social bonds, serving to deplete and not construct the "social capital" needed for community growth.[33]

Reform efforts exist within most professional systems that seek to incorporate new principles of effective practice into professional work. In mental health, the federally-supported Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) has sought to create this sea change. A variety of school reform and restructuring efforts -- from the Comer process to Levin's accelerated education to Zigler's 21st Century schools -- all have based their work on some common underpinnings, most notably the school's role to serve the neighborhood and community in which it sits.[34] Family preservation services have led reform in child welfare and spawned broader efforts, such as the Clark Foundation's Community Partnerships for Protecting Children Initiative, as well.[35] More comprehensive approaches to improving

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[33] For one much quoted articulation of this issue, see: McKnight, John, "Do No Harm: Policy Options That Meet Human Needs," *Social Policy* (Summer 1989) pp. 4-15. This critique, however, also can be used to justify lessening rather than changing government involvement, as evidenced both in Herrnstein and Murray, *op. cit.*, and Murray's earlier work: Murray, Charles. *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*. New York: Basic Books, 1984.

[34] The school reform literature is generally stronger on this issue than the school-linked services literature. Fruchter, Galletta, and White address some of these issues in their book on parental involvement. They draw primarily from the school restructuring reform work of Comer, Levin, and others, rather than from the school-linked service literature, for their examples. They emphasize that "[s]chools must create staff-parent interactions that reduce the gaps caused by the differences between home and school, and through this supportive climate, create staff-student relationships that produce positive developmental experiences for minority students." (p. 59) Fruchter, Norm, Anne Galletta, and J. Lynne White. *New Directions in Parent Involvement*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, 1992.

[35] The Clark Foundation was a leader in supporting states in developing intensive family preservation services, spawning much activity in this area. Through the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children Initiative, the Foundation is working with selected local sites in four states (Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Missouri) to seek to restructure the protective service system to be more neighborhood-based, with one goal of diverting children and families from the formal protective service system to supports that are more neighborhood-based and tie into ongoing natural networks of support. For a description of this strategy, see: Farrow, Frank. *Getting From Here to There: Building a Community-Based System for the Protection of Children*, Paper prepared for the Executive Session on New Paradigms for Child

32 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

child health, that rely upon transmedical supports, have emerged as well.[36] The disability world has some of the best illustrations of the tensions that moving toward a consumer-driven service model brings out with professionals in that world.[37] Still, most of these reform efforts largely remain as exceptions to the norm, better reflected even in local practice than in administrative reform.[38] At best, they are tolerated by the larger system; often, they have to fight to sustain their reforms.[39] They stand in sharp contrast to the professional training in

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Protective Services. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, 1995. For a description of the current status of the initiative, see: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. *The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation Program For Children Strategy Statement, March 1995*. New York, NY: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, 1996.

[36] For a discussion of five state health initiatives that have developed comprehensive, "transmedical" approaches to improve infant and child health and the political and administrative leadership that helped them expand statewide, see: Bruner, Charles and James Perrin. *More Than Health Insurance: State Initiatives to Improve Infant and Child Health*. New York: Milbank Memorial Fund, 1995.

[37] Some parents of children with disabilities, because they have had personal resources and ways to access expertise, have broken new ground in securing services and supports for their children and eliciting changes in professional practice, although they frequently have had to battle with professionals and overcome professional hegemony to do so. They have developed a variety of networks to provide them independent access to clinical and legal information so they can advocate on behalf of their own children and on behalf of other families with members with disabilities. For discussion of new practices in the disability field in general, see: Bradley, Valerie, John Ashbaugh, and Bruce Blaney (eds.). *Creating Individual Supports for People with Disabilities: A Mandate for Change at Many Levels*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1994. See also: Nisbet, Jan. *Natural Supports in School, at Work, and in the Community for People with Severe Disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1992.

[38] For an indication of the current state of the field in incorporating new practice principles into a variety of professional disciplines (education, child welfare, health care, youth development, supporting people with disabilities, welfare reform, and child mental health) see: Family Resource Coalition, "Building Bridges: Supporting Families Across Service Systems," *FRC Report* Vol 13 (Spring/Summer 1994). Many of the overview essays still treat family support as a valuable additional service to which they can refer families rather than a way of restructuring existing professional practice. The program examples are generally much stronger than the overview essays.

[39] In 1993, the Child and Family Policy Center interviewed eight "exemplary initiatives" that had developed comprehensive, community-based systems of support for families and children. We asked their leaders to describe their funding sources, and the degree to which they had accessed (or tried to access) a variety of federal funding streams. We found that they had generally pieced together funding from a variety of sources, usually in the form of

most university systems.[40]

It is not that education, medical, child welfare, mental health, and a host of other services are not needed by unprepared parents and disinvested neighborhoods to achieve success. Rather, it is that they currently are too remote from people's lives, disempowering of those they seek to serve, rigid in response. James Comer argues that an essential task within poor schools is to reduce the distance between the culture of the school and the culture of the community.[41] This applies with equal validity to other publicly-funded institutions serving children and families.

System reform extends beyond a more effective means to coordinate response across professional lines -- the "service integration" dictum.[42]

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demonstration or new programmatic funds. They had done very little to access existing federal funding streams, in part because of the logistical problems in identifying them and their ground-rules. In general, the initiatives were successful in securing what they needed by "beating the system," rather than changing it. For a write-up of these experiences, see: Seeley, Ken and Charles Bruner. *Federal Policy and Comprehensive Services: A Perspective from Cutting Edge Initiatives*. Falls Church, MD: National Center for Service Integration, 1993.

[40] There are some movements to reform professional education to be more inter-disciplinary and family-focused. See, in particular: Adler, Louise, and Sid Gardner, eds. *The Politics of Linking Schools and Social Services*. London: The Falmer Press, 1994.

[41] Comer stresses that "the home, parents, and neighborhood and the teacher, school, and school program must not be at odds; this was our major motive for trying to bring low-income parents together with the largely middle-income public school's faculty." Building trust between these groups is essential. Comer, James. *School Power*. New York: Free Press, 1980, p. 126. One of the central points made by Italian political philosopher and activist Antonio Gramsci is that the role of the leader is to reduce the distance between the leadership and the led. Gramsci, Antonio, "The Modern Prince," in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Howard Smith, trans. and eds. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers, 1971, pp. 123-205.

[42] In fact, some families (and many programs) actually may benefit from the "slack" they are provided by systems not knowing too much about one another. They can leverage what they need when systems do not recognize that they are being multiply served. Families and programs may be very good case managers and entrepreneurs in a fragmented funding environment -- and even use it to their own, and society's, benefit. Further, categorical programs often confer certain rights and protections to consumers by establishing objective eligibility criteria. Simply making hierarchical systems more efficient or broadening discretionary authority of workers is not likely to "empower" consumers. For a discussion of this issue, see: Bruner, Charles. *Recognizing the Strengths of the Current System as a Prelude*

34 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It involves reform within each system, with attention to how that work builds "social capital" and broadens connections and ties. It means new forms of practice that recognize the need for both professional and experiential expertise. The distance between professional and community must be lessened in hiring practices; it must also be lessened through how professionals define their role with nonprofessionals.[43]

3. Building social capital through collective action. While the first two strategies can contribute to the creation of social capital, they are unlikely to produce the breadth of natural networks of support, social links, and community norms that are needed to insure high rates of child success. A third strategic area involves building that social capital in neighborhoods where the community fabric is torn or threadbare.

There are at least two approaches to constructing this social capital. The first is to establish additional programs designed to serve this purpose -- recreational leagues, youth development activities, civic involvement events. This provision of new "primary services" may be through neighborhood residents stepping forward or through intermediaries from outside the neighborhood providing them.[44] If

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to Designing a New Service Strategy, Occasional Paper #7. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1993.

[43] One way, already discussed (see Halpern, *op. cit.*) is to employ community workers as part of a team of workers, hopefully providing experience and career pathways for those workers. A second way is to make more explicit links between professionals and the nonprofessional, self-help movement, assuring that professionals support (and, within managed care and other arrangements even finance) self-help organizations and activities. See: Riessman and Carroll, *op. cit.* A third way is through actual teaming of professionals and community advocates in frontline work with stressed families in disinvested neighborhoods, exploring how this teaming can heighten the professional's capacity to use professional expertise and heighten the community advocate's capacity to draw upon resources available within the community. Some cutting-edge work in this area is being conducted by Jill Kinney and her colleagues in the Eastside Community of Takoma, Washington. For some introductory observations, see: Kinney, Jill. *Walking Our Talk in the Neighborhood: Operationalizing Principles of Effective Frontline Practice in Partnerships with Natural Helpers* (unpublished paper, 1995).

[44] Chapin Hall has been a leading proponent of the need to provide such services in disinvested neighborhoods, which they call primary services. See: Richman, Wynn, and Costello, *op. cit.* This approach was taken by Congress in establishing funding for "Midnight

intermediaries are used, however, efforts must be developed to convert from operation by those outside the community to operation by those within.

The second is to enable neighborhood residents to construct their own versions. This involves supporting and facilitating neighborhood organizing that helps provide pathways for those latent "social capitalists" to come forward and build those networks of support.[45] Such organizing also can produce the civil society needed to support and enforce community norms.

While both may be part of an overall strategy, the latter is likely to be more fundamental. In the long term, these networks of support should be self-generating and naturally-occurring. Eliminating barriers that impede their generation is preferable to providing substitutes for their absence.

A final comment on the development of these networks is that this work has a strong moral and spiritual side. It is essential that reforms recognize the power of this spiritual dimension and not shy away from it. This means more concerted outreach and work with faith communities. It also means recognizing and validating the spiritual

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Basketball." There are inherent limitations with this approach to building social capital, however. First, not everyone may be attracted to basketball; there must be a diversity of opportunities for youth, to reflect different interests and aspirations within the youth population. Second, it is not the basketball itself that produces successful Midnight Basketball. Rather, it is more likely to be the vision of the program developers, their ability to connect to youth, hold them to expectations beyond playing basketball, and help them become involved in their community that produces their success. In short, Midnight Basketball (or Midnight Hockey, Chess, or Photography) succeeds only when it reflects the core concepts set out by Public/Private Ventures (see footnote 31). The challenge to funders is to fund these core concepts, not specific program structures. Public/Private Ventures, *op. cit.*

[45] Most neighborhood organizing is designed both to build solidarity and cohesion within the neighborhood and to help people "see new possibilities." As has been expressed by Rainbow Research Group, one of the keys to successful organizing is to provide multiple opportunities for involvement for residents, recognizing that different people can contribute in different ways but all can contribute in some way. This may result in some residents delivering "primary services." It also will build stronger social bonds and community norms. See: McGinniss, Grace. *Prerequisites to Power: Six Principles for Building Community*. Minneapolis: Rainbow Research Group, 1987. See also: Mayer, Steven and Steve Gray. *Successful Neighborhood Self-Help: Some Lessons Learned*. Minneapolis: Rainbow Research Group, 1985.

and moral motivations of those involved in reform, recognizing that external gains and rewards alone are unlikely to sustain the efforts of reform.

4. *Creating economic hope and opportunity.* The fourth strategic area may be largely new territory to those with backgrounds in the education, health, and human services worlds. It involves addressing aspirational needs of families and neighborhoods that fall within the economic realm. An early implementation assessment of the federal Healthy Start program, an infant mortality reduction initiative for distressed neighborhoods, provided the following, common sense advice:

> *Ask the community to identify its problems, concerns, and needs.* Do not assume the priorities of project leaders are necessarily the priorities of community members. In an area with high unemployment and inadequate housing, families may not see health care as a priority issue. These other issues must be dealt with before prenatal and pediatric care can be fully addressed.[46]

This point may seem obvious, but it is an experience that is often repeated in reform initiatives, very frequently with reformers unprepared to take the next step. It may be stated simply, "If you ask community members for their views, you have to be prepared to listen to what they say." In disinvested neighborhoods, issues of jobs and economic opportunity are certain to end up high on the list.

This does not mean that comprehensive reform efforts in the education, health, and human service worlds must take on all the tasks of economic development. It does mean that they need a clearer understanding of how these needs can be addressed, develop alliances with those who can address them, and help insure that their own direct work with children, youth, and families helps create skills and

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[46] McCoy-Thompson, Meri, Julie Vanneman, and Felicia Bloom. *The Healthy Start Initiative: A Community-Driven Approach to Infant Mortality Reduction -- Vol. II. Early Implementation: Lessons Learned.* Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 1994, p. viii.

workforce readiness commensurate with the development of employment opportunities.

This equation -- between jobs and job readiness -- requires and deserves community dialogue. Tom Dewar and David Schie have discussed five strategies for promoting jobs in disinvested neighborhoods: targeting specific industries for employment, converting human services into job opportunities, stimulating new business and job growth, addressing the spatial mismatch between people and jobs, and building connections between employers and low-income job seekers.[47]

Clearly, in implementing the first two reform strategies, communities can work to convert human services (and education) into job opportunities for community residents, both as they employ community workers and as they create opportunity ladders into professional positions.[48] The third strategy can afford additional opportunities for employment for community residents. On an economic development side, community initiatives also can foster entrepreneurial, micro-enterprise development, which also can contribute to employment options.[49]

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[47] Dewar, Tom, and David Schie. *Promoting Job Opportunities: Toward a Better Future for Low-Income Children and Families*. Minneapolis: Rainbow Research Group and Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995.

[48] This is the second strategy discussed in Dewar and Schie, *op. cit.* It also is discussed in length by Halpern in *Fair Start*, *op. cit.* Halpern notes, however, that special attention has to be given to establishing opportunity structures and career ladders for community workers, if these are to be more than dead-end jobs.

[49] There has been extensive work on an international as well as a national level in exploring "micro-enterprise" development as a means for regenerating disinvested neighborhoods or developing underdeveloped economies. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Aspen Institute both have been active in supporting micro-enterprise development in the United States and have a number of useful publications on the subject. Generally, however, it is recognized that such self-employment approaches appeal to a small part of the potential labor market, perhaps two to seven percent. They thus can contribute to community economic regeneration, but are unlikely to be a sufficient strategy for that regeneration. For a brief discussion of policy strategies to support micro-enterprise development, see: Association for Enterprise Opportunity. *Opening Enterprise Opportunity: Expanding the Microenterprise Development Field*. Chicago: Association for Enterprise Opportunity, 1994.

While these approaches can contribute to the development of new job opportunities for residents in disinvested neighborhoods, however, it is unlikely they can provide the numbers or diversity of opportunities that are needed to turn the economic picture around.[50] This requires a commitment of new investments into divested neighborhoods commensurate with need. One of the reasons that neighborhoods are distressed is that they do not have the economic capital within themselves to rebuild.[51] They require outside support -- which means

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[50] In "The Case of the NotSoEZ Community," I sought to describe the number and compensation structure of jobs required in a distressed neighborhood of 50,000 residents in order for those neighborhood residents to have employment equivalent to residents in the remainder of the larger community. I also hypothesized where those jobs might come from, concluding that public sector employment and indigenous economic growth (through micro-enterprise and other economic activities) could only produce a part of the jobs needed and that a significant share must come from the private sector outside the EZ. At the same time, residents needed to acquire more skills and job experience to assume many of these positions. The challenge is to simultaneously build workforce capacity and create job opportunities. See: Bruner, Charles, "How Can Empowerment Zones Succeed? The Case of the 'NotSoEZ' Community," in Bruner, Charles. *Disinvested Communities and Comprehensive Services: Linking Family, Community, and Economic Development*, Occasional Paper #15. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1995.

[51] For one perspective, see: Halpern, Robert. *Rebuilding the Inner City: A History of Neighborhood Initiatives to Address Poverty in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Halpern writes:

> We continue to view, or at least to treat, inner-city neighborhoods as if they were autonomous entities--not really part of society--created by residents who were masters of their community's fate. "The people are going to solve their own problems" becomes "The poor are going to solve their own problems." Yet there is now abundant evidence that the beliefs, priorities, and practices of people and institutions rooted outside poor neighborhoods have had a profound effect on creating and then undermining the quality of life within them, and on constraining neighborhood residents' efforts to improve their individual and collective lives....
>
> The history of neighborhood initiative also reflects more subtle contradictions and disproportions. Reformers have not only asked the poor to solve problems they did not cause, but have distrusted either or both their capacity to do so and the motives of the indigenous leadership that emerged with self-help efforts. Reformers also often have disliked the consequences of community mobilization, whether articulation of specific demands or expression of anger and frustration. The tendency to trust the residents of poor communities halfway is as old as neighborhood initiative itself. Morone described the Progressives' approach to local control as "protoparticipatory," since middle-class reformers themselves both set the reform agenda and determined courses of action. Lack of trust for residents of poor neighborhoods particularly undermined government and foundation-sponsored initiatives in the 1960s. Neighborhood initiative has been viewed as consonant with American problem-solving traditions only when the dynamics and demands that it presented seemed reasonable to those living outside of poor

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building bridges with economic interests. The Consensus Organizing Institute, among others, has assumed a "post-Alinksy" approach to neighborhood organization that seeks to integrate workforce preparation with job creation by working to build leadership at the neighborhood level while reaching out to the larger community (especially business and civic leaders) to establish "common ground" to start joint actions between the two.[52] Within the business field, there is some movement in this direction as well.[53]

There exist a variety of organizations throughout the country that support economic development within disinvested neighborhoods, around housing, micro-enterprise development, and other initiatives. Increasingly, these community development efforts are recognizing the need to address residents' social concerns and to support leadership development. The best efforts also find that, by increasing resident participation, they create new social ties and connections and assist in "social capital development" as well. In fact, neighborhood development and neighborhood organizing increasingly are viewed as linked activities.[54] Like reforms in the human services world, however, they often find they represent marginal, small-scale additions to the current configuration of economic growth and opportunity in their communities, rather than fundamentally altering the economic growth ethos in the community.

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neighborhoods. (pp. 221-3)

[52] Consensus Organizing Institute. *Concept and Background Paper*. Boston: Consensus Organizing Institute, 1994.

[53] For instance, the Committee for Economic Development, an organization with strong corporate CEO representation, urges that government and business become a partner in neighborhood revitalization by promoting such outside support. Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development. ***Rebuilding Inner-City Communities: A New Approach to the Nation's Urban Crisis***. New York: Committee for Economic Development. 1995. A recent article by Michael Porter, from the Harvard Business School, argues that there exist good, unrecognized business opportunities in the inner-city, although his discussion is not about building overall economic vitality of those neighborhoods but rather taking advantage of specific, untapped markets. See: Porter, Michael, "The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City," ***Harvard Business Review*** (May-June 1995) pp. 55-71.

[54] For instance, the Committee for Economic Development's report, ***Rebuilding Inner-City Communities***, *op. cit.*, devotes a chapter to "Local Action Creating and Using Social Capital." pp. 20-37.

To succeed with children current systems fail, creating economic opportunity for families and within neighborhoods is needed. Reform efforts must recognize the potential for creating economic opportunity in the ways discussed above: through employment within their own service reform efforts; through building alliances and connections with those within the neighborhoods engaged in physical and economic capital development; through integrating their human capital and workforce preparation strategies with real economic opportunities; and through engaging the larger private sector growth community in the dialogue and the steps that need to be taken.

The Issue of Critical Mass

All that has to change can easily lead to a sense of being overwhelmed. If only there were another way! Yet critical to reaping the full benefits of any strategy (or all strategies taken together), but seldom discussed in an era of "limited resources," is their provision at a level that creates a "critical mass" of positive activity. The true potential of reforms may be realized only when implemented at a sufficient level to produce contagion. This is true both for the depth and breadth of reform.

On depth, a comprehensive response to individual families (one of the elements of "effective practice") requires that some fundamental family needs be met. It is more than listening respectfully; it is taking action. If housing cannot be stabilized, or some degree of order placed in daily life, it is difficult to move forward. While many programs aspire to be comprehensive, they often fall short in their ability to secure critical supports. They often must acknowledge that they do not have the resources available to address multi-need families, where low skills, drug involvement, and other conditions exist. They often are not capable of following up with families over the long haul, instead stopping their involvement after initial steps are taken. While some initial steps may produce enduring gains and change life trajectories, many require subsequent steps to produce lasting change.

On breadth, the challenge is to help whole neighborhoods begin to see new possibilities. Helping individual families while leaving

untouched the lives of their extended family, friends, and neighbors creates a drag on even the work that is performed with the families being served. At worst, others will subvert that family's growth; at best, the family may be forced to leave a part of what they have valued in their life behind.[55]

Alternatively, at some point, when there is a critical mass of activity of families supported and experiencing growth and opportunity, there is the potential for everything to begin to change. Families see that they are not experiencing growth alone, that they can help and be aided by their friends and neighbors. This synergy is both by-product and needed glue.

The Issue of Scale

At what point does one reach a "critical mass of activity," with a family or within a neighborhood? Alternatively, when are one's efforts too limited to show much hope for any true gain? One way to begin to address the scope of activity needed is to more seriously examine reform efforts in the context of their being brought "to scale," or implemented on a level sufficient to produce neighborhood- or community-wide impacts.[56] Such analysis can be coupled with

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[55] There are serious critiques of efforts to seek as a goal to rebuild inner-city communities, which argue that it may be impossible to truly regenerate neighborhoods, because residents who experience personal economic growth move to other neighborhoods. There obviously are many examples of past efforts that have proven unsuccessful. For this perspective, see: Lemann, Nicholas, "The Myth of Community Development," *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (January, 1994) pp. 27-31ff. Alternatively, however, efforts that focus on individual residents, when successful, may simply be substituting one individual's success for another's failure in a zero-sum game, e.g. the fallacy of composition. It further is possible that, if a "critical mass" of activity occurs within a neighborhood, residents have reasons to stay, as they can enjoy an improved standard of living within the neighborhood that their improved employment and earnings bring.

[56] In 1993, the National Center for Service Integration convened a Wingspread Conference on the issue of "Going to Scale with a Comprehensive Service Strategy." Participants agreed to the following definitions of scale:

1. Implementing, within a sufficiently large jurisdiction to encounter most major institutional and political barriers and issues;
2. A new set of ongoing institutional policies, practices, and philosophy (community-based, family-centered, comprehensive, preventive, tailored to individual needs, inclusive);

"return-on-investment" or "cost-of-failure" modelling to suggest the potential long-term cost-tradeoffs and make a case for significant investments.[57]

The Allegheny County data presented previously were further analyzed in this manner. First, the measures of incidence of specific conditions in "high risk" neighborhoods were used as proxies for social expenditures devoted to addressing them. Child welfare caseloads were used as a proxy for how child welfare expenditures were distributed in the county; single parent families living in poverty were used as a proxy for how AFDC spending was distributed; violent crimes were used as a proxy for how jail and prison spending was

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3. Reaching a sufficiently large proportion of the target constituency for a sufficient amount of time to have the capacity to test the effectiveness of the strategy;
4. By its impact upon outcomes on a jurisdictional level;
5. To change the expectations, behaviors, and skills of the various constituencies involved; and
6. To construct a durable governance and financing system that is cross-system in its authority.

A "critical mass" of activity may occur before achieving this definition of "scale," but should result in an acceleration of movement toward "scale." National Center for Service Integration. *Wingspread Conference: Going to Scale with a Comprehensive Service Strategy*. Falls Church, MD: National Center for Service Integration, 1993.

[57] Several different methodologies have been used to describe the "cost of failure," both on a population characteristic base (e.g. unprepared parents, high-risk youth) and on a geographic basis (e.g. distressed neighborhoods). Some have focussed on "risk factors" generally; others have sought to identify "risk factors" applied to a specific "rotten outcome" such as juvenile violence, adolescent parenting, or substance abuse. For a conceptual perspective, see: Bruner, Charles (with Stephen Scott). *Investment-Based Budgeting: The Principles in Converting from a Remediation/Response to a Prevention/Investment Budget*, Occasional Paper #11. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1994. A similar treatment with respect to juvenile justice is found in: The Conservation Company and Juvenile Law Center. *Building Bridges: Strategic Planning and Alternative Financing for Systems Reform*. Philadelphia: The Conservation Company and Juvenile Law Center, 1994.

For illustration of an approach regarding child maltreatment, see: Gould, Marsha and Tracey O'Brien. *Child Maltreatment in Colorado: The Value of Prevention and the Cost of Failure to Prevent*. Denver: Colorado Children's Trust Fund, 1995. For another approach to child abuse, see: Caldwell, Robert. *The Costs of Child Abuse vs. Child Abuse Prevention: Michigan's Experience*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Children's Trust Fund and Michigan State University, 1992. For an analysis of high risk youth, see: Cohen, Mark. *The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth* (Preliminary Draft of Paper: 1994). For a family support approach to families with young children, see: Child and Family Policy Center. *Investing in Families, Prevention, and School Readiness: A Framework Paper*. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1993.

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distributed among the population; and so on. Per capita income was used as a proxy for realized and unrealized tax base. Second, the question was raised, "What if the high risk neighborhoods had similar characteristics to other Allegheny County neighborhoods; how much less public spending would be made on ameliorative services and incarceration costs and how much more would be generated in tax revenue."[58]

Table Four

Selected Potential Savings from Improving Child and Family Well-Being in High-Risk Allegheny County Neighborhoods

Maintenance Savings	
AFDC Savings	$ 57,364,877
Medicaid Savings	$ 68,837,852
Food Stamp Savings	$ 42,531,124
Remediation/Public Protection Savings	
Child Welfare Services Savings	$ 41,770,459
Jail Savings	$ 19,179,360
Prison Savings	$ 52,945,422
Juvenile Detention Savings	$ 15,617,448
Additional Tax Revenues	$265,031,058
TOTAL	$563,277,600

Note: Savings are based upon high-risk neighborhoods having rates of child outcomes and consequent expenditure levels equivalent to other Allegheny County neighborhoods. The savings, by level of government, are: federal ($262.9 million), state ($214.9 million), and county ($85.5 million).

[58] This comparison is not used to imply that children and families in other neighborhoods are performing optimally. Rather, it provides a real-world baseline that is at least theoretically achievable and would provide for equity across the county, if achieved.

As Table Four shows, the resulting calculations produced an overall figure of the public "cost of failure" within these "high risk" neighborhoods of nearly $565 million annually, borne by the local, state, and federal governments.

The impetus for producing this information in Allegheny County was to make the case for further developing Family Centers to serve families with very young children in these neighborhoods. A population-based analysis of need (identifying the number of families that might participate in and benefit from Family Centers in the "high risk" neighborhoods and the average cost of supporting those families according to the Centers' mission[59]) yielded an $18.5 million annual projection of the required investment for full implementation of a Family Center strategy in those neighborhoods.

The $18.5 million and $565 million figures are instructive, on several counts. First, the $18.5 million figure is well in excess of the types of resources communities of Allegheny County's size generally commit to frontline practice reform strategies. It challenges reformers to move beyond demonstration efforts as satisfactory approaches to reform.

Second, the $565 million figure indicates that there is a potentially very large gain to society in achieving major improvements in child well-being within such neighborhoods. The costs of disinvestment are very high.

Third, even if an $18.5 million investment is made in Family Centers and produces a high rate of return (the study modelled the

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[59] This mission involves providing the types of frontline services described previously as the first strategic approach and linking families with, but not directly providing, other needed supports such as housing, child care, and employment and training. The Centers help families establish and work toward goals and serve as a point of congregation for activities for families, children, and the neighborhood. While many Centers offer youth activities and some of the parents are adolescents, their primary work is with families with very young children. Thus, the $18.5 million figure does not include all the frontline work that the community may require to address the first strategy reform activities.

impacts of a 3:1 return-on-investment[60]), such a strategy alone would only go a small way to eliminating the distress those neighborhoods face. Other strategies and investments are needed to capture a significant share of the $565 million.

The Allegheny County data fit into the prior discussion on the need for multiple strategies -- family support, systems reform, community building, and economic opportunity -- to significantly alter the life prospects for unprepared parents and their children and for children and families living in disinvested neighborhoods. It presents both a rationale for thinking "big" and all the challenges that brings. In Allegheny County alone, a metropolitan area of only 1.3 million people, the investment or redeployment of resources[61] must be in the

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[60] Advocates for prevention initiatives frequently discuss the benefits in terms of a "return on investment" of three dollars or more for every dollar invested -- in prenatal care, in early childhood education, in family planning, or in immunizations. In fact, there are few studies that have shown such gains. A recent article reviewing the literature on prenatal care found no evidence that initiatives to increase the use of prenatal care show immediate savings by averting $3 in neonatal expenditures for every $1 invested, although this has commonly been cited as established "fact." See: Huntington, Jane and Fred Connell, "For Every Dollar Spent--The Cost Savings Argument for Prenatal Care," *The New England Journal of Medicine* Vol. 331, No. 19 (Nov. 10, 1994), pp. 1303-1307.

The most publicized study of the gains from high quality early childhood education, that conducted by High Scope Research Foundation of the Perry Pre-School Project, has documented savings over a twenty-year period in the order of $7 eventually saved for every dollar invested. Only a portion of these savings are in public fund expenditures, however. The majority are in reduced economic loss to victims of crime as a result of lower crime rates. See: Schweinhart, Lawrence, Helen Barnes, and David Weikart. *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27.* Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1993. Based upon prior research, a 3:1 public return-on-investment from Family Centers represents an optimistic projection. At the same time, there is a very small research base that has had sufficient power to statistically document what might be cost-effective impacts of Family Centers, both because of generally small N's and generally short-time frames. Moreover, Family Centers are likely to be most effective when they are coupled with other activities in a community and are not the sole source of new support. The research literature can provide almost no guidance on the potential interactive effects when multiple strategies are pursued.

[61] Sid Gardner, among others, contends that much of what we fund in the name of children and families today, however well-meaning, is wasteful and ineffective. There already exists an enormous amount of resources expended by public systems that cannot demonstrate that they are helping children to succeed. These extend well beyond ameliorative and public protection services dealing with problems after-the-fact; they include mainstream educational and workforce development funding and a variety of community-based prevention resources.

fifties, and more likely hundreds, of millions of dollars annually to expect to produce substantial gain and elimination of disadvantage. Taking that to a national scale, the discussion is, even in former United States Senator Everett Dirksen's term, "about real money."[62]

Gardner argues that advocates must first commit to redeploying these resources before there can be a persuasive argument for new funds. See: Gardner, Sid, "Babies, Bathwater, and Muddy Waters," in: The Finance Project and Institute for Educational Leadership. *Dollars and Sense: Diverse Perspectives on Block Grants and the Personal Responsibility Act.* Washington, DC: The Finance Project and Institute for Educational Leadership, 1995, pp. 5-12.

While reformers must be politically sensitive to the need to deploy existing resource more efficiently and effectively, there also is a need to recognize there is a limit to the extent to which systems can be made completely efficient, public or private. Whether redeployed or newly invested funds, however, strategies with superior rates-of-return over current approaches are needed if there are going to be dramatically altered results. The magnitude of these shifts -- new investments or redeployment of funds from less-effective strategies -- must be of a size that, if reasonably successful, will produce marked changes on a neighborhood basis.

[62] Everett Dirksen is noted for coining the expression, "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon it adds up to real money." An analogous national figure to an investment of $100 million annually in Allegheny County's "high risk" neighborhoods is of the order of $20 billion annually, or "real money."

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Chapter IV
Roles in Implementation

Obviously, achieving this level of commitment to change and investment of resources will not happen easily or occur overnight. If funding were to become available, there is no proven blueprint for successful implementation that can be carted out. There is neither the capacity to design nor the structure to carry out such ambitious reforms, probably even on a very localized basis in those neighborhoods and communities most ready for reform.

It will not happen at all, however, unless we begin to ready ourselves and more consciously and concertedly take on this task. Ultimately, achieving the prize of successfully addressing the underlying question, *"How can we succeed with children that current systems fail?,"* entails constructing a compelling national vision and a grassroots social movement that embraces it. It means new responsibilities for all of us who espouse the need for more effective services and support for children and families.

Here are some thoughts on what we need to do to build this capacity.

A Compelling National Vision and Role

While there is increasing recognition of the problems facing children and families in America and there are many individual initiatives undertaking one or another of the strategies described above, there is not a vision for what could be for children that provides a call to action on a national scale. Again using the Allegheny County data as illustration, the federal government has a major stake in this well-being and bears the greatest share of current social costs.

Over the short-term, block grants and a de-entitled federal environment may limit federal liability. The exchange of greater state and local flexibility for less funding may facilitate additional experimentation and innovation at the state and community level.

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Both can easily move reformers in the direction of state and local action.

In the long-run, however, the federal government must play a major role both in financing and in supporting comprehensive reform efforts, particularly in poorer states and communities where the resources do not exist.

Moreover, this must involve more than the addition of another set of programs or a new block grant to the already extensive array of such programs and initiatives. While new federal budgeting is reducing the number of federal programs serving children and families to an extent, it largely retains broad categorical boundaries separating health from education, education from human services, human services from housing and urban development, and even substance abuse prevention from juvenile delinquency prevention from compensatory education. It provides few incentives to connecting with natural networks of support.[63]

The closest thing to a new approach was Senator Nancy Kassebaum's proposed, but not enacted, Youth Development Block Grant legislation, which elicited limited excitement among the child advocacy community or the existing constituency of associations and providers serving youth. While there have been many critiques of both the fragmented and categorical nature of federal funding support for children and families and of the changes proposed by Congress for many of the same programs,[64] child advocacy-driven efforts in recent

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[63] One of the greatest consequences, from a service perspective, in the federal reforms is likely to be a movement toward "managed care," particularly within health care but also within other service systems. While one can construct "managed care" systems that are neighborhood-based and draw in and even fiscally support natural helping networks as a part of the care, to date, the thrust in managed care has been towards contracting with large intermediary organizations that negotiate contracts and rates primarily using a medical model that sees care in terms of professional, medical services.

[64] For a variety of perspectives on then-pending federal welfare reform legislation, see: *Dollars and Sense, op. cit.* A good historical overview of block grants, paying particular attention to the implementation of block grants during the Reagon administration, is found in: Hayes, Cheryl. *Rethinking Block Grants: Toward Improved Intergovernmental Financing for Education and Other Children's Services*. Washington, DC: The Finance Project, 1995. Hayes concludes that, absent a strong vision of what could be, block grants in the Reagan era did not

years to secure funding for new strategies have remained largely categorical -- the ABC child care legislation, the Family Support and Preservation Act, and the enhancements to Head Start -- and, in most respects, incremental. However worthwhile, they are not fiscally sufficient to dramatically alter life outlooks for disadvantaged children and youth.[65] Moreover, the incremental and categorical nature of child advocacy -- without a comprehensive and holistic focus -- has contributed to its characterization as promoting a number of special interests as opposed to representing a broad, public interest.[66]

The federal government needs to play a role; and, for that to occur, advocates of all types need to construct a compelling vision for that role -- which transcends individual categorical interests and concerns. It must not be seen as "trade union" advocacy. There are beginning frameworks for such a vision, but they require much more dialogue and work to becoming compelling ones.[67] Such a vision must describe

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produce major changes in policy and practice at the state and community level, good or bad. There was limited redirection of funding at the state level from the development of those block grants. Cities (and therefore disinvested neighborhoods), however, tended to be losers in the funding realignment.

[65] Under the legislation as initially enacted, Iowa will receive approximately $1.2 million in funding in the final year of the Family Preservation and Support Act funding. While the emphasis of the Act is to produce "systemic reform," this funding represents a very small part of federal funding under IV-B and IV-E and an even more minuscule part of funding for children involved in child welfare services in the state. In 1994, funding for child welfare services exceeded $140 million in Iowa, and funding for special education services exceeded $200 million. While the funding has given new hope and energy to many in the community and state committed to reform, it will be effective only insofar as it leverages substantial changes in the manner in which other funding is used, not how the $1.2 million is expended.

[66] One can get into major philosophical debates about what is a special interest and what is a public interest. In referring to lobbying and advocacy, I have used the terms "private-interested" to refer to those activities undertaken by groups whose membership derives direct economic benefit and "public-interested" to refer to those activities undertaken by groups without a direct economic benefit who usually are motivated by ideological reasons. Others have used different terms. The point is that much advocacy on behalf of children is conducted by coalitions of "private-interested" groups, with "public-interested" groups being fairly small and politically weak. See: Bruner, Charles. *Representation by Surrogate: The Politics of Aging in a State Legislative Setting* (unpublished doctoral thesis: Stanford University: 1978).

[67] See: Center for the Study of Social Policy. *Appropriate Use of Block Grants: One Piece of the Financing Puzzle*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1995. A shorter version is found in Center for the Study of Social Policy, Child and Family Policy

the reasons for federal involvement and the federal government's role and responsibility in protecting and supporting children.[68] It is not fair

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Center, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research/Academy for Educational Development, and Family Resource Coalition. *How Block Grants Can Help, and Why the PRA Approach Won't*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1995. Both papers posit a set of conditions where block grants make sense. To quote from the joint paper, "[T]his approach...makes sense when:

- o Effective responses to child and family needs require holistic approaches that cross program, professional and agency boundaries;
- o Effective responses require that services and supports be contoured to the strengths and resources of the community and require strong community ownership to be effective;
- o There is a coherent focus that offers confidence that the emphasis will remain upon children, youth and families the federal government believes should be served (e.g., the people served by programs consolidated into the block grant will not be ignored);
- o Flexibility in responding differently to different community and family circumstances is needed to achieve desired goals; [and]
- o Activities will lead to more collaborative, less fragmented, and better integrated services and supports, including those not directly funded through block grants. (p. 6)

The manner in which such changes are constructed and new partnering roles between community, state, and federal stakeholders established will be crucial. Prior to the Contract With America, when advocates were seeking to support "change" through administratively-orchestrated reforms, I developed mock federal guidelines for a "Break the Categorical Mold" Initiative. It was designed to enable communities to examine and potentially redeploy all federal resources as they devised new strategies, with a fundamentally new, joint-learning relationship between federal, state, and local government. These guidelines offer some illustration of the fundamental shift in thinking about the federal role that needs to occur. See: Bruner, Charles, "Breaking the Categorical Mold," in National Center for Service Integration. *Wingspread Conference: Going to Scale with a Comprehensive Services Strategy, op. cit.*

[68] In thinking about the federal role in funding services for children and families, I have posed several responsibilities:

1. To assure that all children (and families) have some minimum access to the guarantees of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" regardless of where in the country they live. This would seem to me to be a federal levelling role in providing such guarantees, which would include:
   - o humane treatment of persons with disabilities,
   - o shelter and minimum subsistence needs, including food and clothing, for the destitute,
   - o safety from harm, particularly from attacks by others, including family members,
   - o treatment of life-threatening and disabling conditions, and
   - o access for children to opportunities to achieve and work to reach some level of self-sufficiency.
2. To invest in human and social capital development when that investment has a positive return to society and can be done most efficiently and effectively through federal involvement.
3. To foster innovation and diffusion across the states to keep pace with changing social needs and conditions.

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to expect a director of a Family Center operating out of a church basement and struggling to secure the $20,000 she needs to keep her parenting education program alive to develop such a vision -- or to connect with her colleagues in the field to produce one. While the basis for such a vision emanates from such grassroots activity and the grassroots can and should be its most ardent supporters, such a vision is not likely to develop solely from the grassroots. Those who know the policy field best -- who have been involved in policy development and child advocacy at the state and national levels -- have a responsibility to seek to create such a vision, albeit with securing "maximum feasible participation" from the field.

This requires policy development that transcends categorical boundaries. It requires a more compelling statement of the role of government in helping prepare parents and invest in disinvested communities. It means distinguishing roles across levels of government and assuring that "devolution" of authority does not become deconstruction of federal involvement and abdication of federal responsibility for assuring minimum conditions for all children.[69] It requires "boldness" in setting out a federal role, moving

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On the first point, state and federal shared- entitlements (e.g. AFDC, IV-E, where the states set many of the levels and conditions and the federal government participates in payment) have done a poor job, as they are dependent in large part upon a state's capacity and willingness to provide matching funding. Poor families in richer states receive much more federal funding than poor families in poorer states. Federally-based entitlements (e.g. food stamps, SSI) have done a much better job. Obviously, we are moving away from even state-federal entitlements, which is likely to mean even greater inequities across states. It is hard to argue for new, federal-based floors for families in the current political context, but I believe this *should be* the federal government's role.

The second and third points represent fundamental reasons for increased federal involvement in supporting comprehensive, community-based approaches to improving child (and family and neighborhood) outcomes on a less categorical and more preventive basis. In developing a national vision and federal role, I believe these issues must be discussed.

[69] See previous footnote for one description of the needed ongoing federal role and responsibility. "Devolution" is not a good in itself. The rationale for moving decision making away from the federal or state level and to the community and neighborhood level should be clearly articulated. It is because many strategies, to be effective, must be closely connected to natural neighborhood and community networks of support. To do so, they must be contoured to the strengths within the neighborhood and community, which cannot be achieved through uniform state regulations. Further, if they are to work there must be strong investment, ownership, and understanding at the neighborhood and community level. The most

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beyond marginal, demonstration efforts. Finally, it requires concerted collaborative activity among many in the field today who have been involved in more particularized policy advocacy and development.

Grassroots Mobilization for Needed Reforms

The strength of the Christian Coalition rests not in the shrewdness of its leadership, but in the numbers and passion it can mobilize at the grassroots. This mobilization is possible in large measure because it has established a vision that is more compelling than others currently available, one that resonates with a broad swath of working Americans anxious about their, and their children's future. There is no equivalent "network" or "movement" that articulates a more inclusive theme that stresses family values, individual responsibility, and the success that society should ensure those bring.[70]

Building this type of robust network of grassroots voices requires strategies that can engage that church basement Family Center director and her own connecting world of involved parents and community friends. It requires ties to community-based organizing and development groups.

It also requires caucuses and constituencies of color, sorting out new internal relationships of power and acknowledging that current policy development, associational, and programmatic leadership is largely

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enlightened state or federal guidelines and policies will not be effectively carried out if workers do not understand why they are doing what they are directed to do and what value it has to do it. The decision to "devolve" certain decision making responsibilities and not others should be strategic. Moreover, higher levels of government should not be seen as abdicating responsibilities for the safety and support of children by moving such decisions to the community level, but rather determining that devolution is the most effective way to meet those responsibilities.

[70] The Christian Coalition now has a well-defined agenda for families, and a strong grassroots base. Yet when spokespersons for the Christian Coalition appear on Nightline or other programs, the media does not have recognized, countervailing organization spokespersons to present an alternative view. Intellectually, the Communitarians have come closest to seeking to articulate an alternative vision, but they do not have a real network and grassroots base that has worked with them to design their vision, nor are all their tenets entirely consistent with those in the family support field. Their policy recommendations generally have been centrist and they have viewed the potentials for regeneration as limited.

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white and needs to change. It requires trust-building toward the common vision, recognizing that those who have been advocates before still have a major role to play, but must tie their advocacy more closely to a true constituency base. In short, it requires resolving, among those who need to be a part of that broad base, all the issues of race, class, and gender that larger society has so poorly faced.

Further, building such a network involves recognizing the spiritual and moral side of reform. This means including faith communities as partners. It means recognizing and validating the spiritual and moral motivations of those involved in reform. Finally, it means that reformers must not shy away from invoking this dimension into their work.

This, in turn, requires a recognition that many programs -- in family support, neighborhood organizing, and community development -- are operated by intermediary organizations and not yet truly "of the community" they serve. They require further transformation themselves to become truly representative of their neighborhoods -- transformations which must be a part of the activity involved in developing a grassroots movement.

Building such a network and transforming it into a movement or movements must involve outside financial support. While there is a proclivity to such connection and organization, localized, resource-poor organizations cannot secure the time and funds internally that are needed for this constituency-building and leadership development work.[71] Foundations and other friends will have to take on new roles in supporting the building of the grassroots base that is needed for significant reforms. Moreover, they will have to listen to what this

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[71] There are many treatments of this subject. On the ability of the power structure to "buy off" such groups by symbolic rather than substantive actions, see: Edelman, Murray. *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1964. On the types of organization of the poor required to produce change, see: Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*. New York: Academic Press, 1971. For a logical argument on the difficulty of organizing diffuse, public-interested groups, see: Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. A more recent discussion of these arguments is found in: Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

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emerging base articulates and recognize the growing pains it will experience. Without this grassroots base, even if policies are established and resources secured to implement them, the likelihood of implementation true to the principles upon which the policy is based is small.[72]

Developing a compelling national vision and a grassroots movement that supports it are intertwined activities. They need to be developed together. The history of organizing in America tells us as much.[73]

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[72] This grassroots base may not be a single "movement," but a set of organizing movements working more closely with one another. I personally do not believe the family support, neighborhood organizing, school reform, community development, and human service reform efforts all need to blend into each other. They do need to be better linked and provide a more unifying voice, particularly in shaping a response that can succeed with children that current systems fail. Alliances also have to be formed with early childhood education reform efforts and many other more particular reforms, recognizing that not all these always are asking the same question. With respect to early childhood, for instance, the question may involve a broader constituency and a narrower focus, "How can we better prepare all children to face the challenges of the twenty-first century (recognizing that the care of children in the early years increasingly is being performed by paid caregivers as well as parents)?" This is a different question than, "How can we succeed with children that current systems fail?" Specifically, it speaks to the needs of working and professional parents for stable, quality developmental child care arrangements so their children can achieve to their "fullest potential," even though their children are not at great risk of experiencing "rotten outcomes." There are likely to be some tensions in forming such alliances; it cannot be assumed that goals are entirely congruent.

[73] Two of Robert Fisher's conclusions in his historical review of neighborhood organizing in America speak to the importance of connecting neighborhood-based reforms with larger social movements:

> *"There is a Critical Interaction Between Neighborhood Organizing Efforts, National Politics, and Nationwide Social Movements.* A critical interaction also occurs between neighborhood organizing projects and nationwide social movements. Currently, neighborhood organizing and other forms of grassroots activity serve as the building blocks of larger social movements. They provide the spaces, organizational skills, and grassroots heritage which can renew itself in political struggle. At the same time, national movements, once established, provide direction and support to local efforts. ...
>
> *"Problems Besetting Neighborhoods Demand Political Organization Beyond the Neighborhood Level.* Small may be beautiful, more manageable, and more feasible for democratic participation, but commonly the neighborhood is neither the site of the causes of its problems nor the site of the power needed to address them. ... [W]hat neighborhood organizing movements need, as the experiences of the new left and many other projects since have demonstrated, are ongoing, national political organizations which can provide continuity, direction, and motivation for local efforts and which, in turn, can be guided and reinvigorated by struggles in communities and workplaces at the local level."

Fisher, Robert. *Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America*. Boston: G.K.

Involvement of the Corporate World

It has become common to espouse the commonality of interests between the corporate and the human service worlds -- economic growth is dependent upon workforce skills that increasingly depend upon higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills.[74] Coupled with the aging of the population come arguments of the need for the younger workforce to be increasingly productive to sustain those outside of it. The search for this workforce, however, is less bounded by a country's borders than it has been in the past. The appeal to corporate self-interest for an educated workforce alone may not be sufficient to attract the needed commitment from the corporate world.

Community self-interest, however, may. Corporate leadership and talent must commit to examining this potential workforce in new light, as must the community in making its commitment to workforce development.

On this issue and generally, the business mentality can be of use in developing reform strategies. In many respects, the $565 million in annual social costs experienced in Allegheny County represents a potential market that new strategies can seek to capture. The essence of entrepreneurial success is identifying and capturing such markets before one's competitors do. In the business world, the research and development strategy is not to go in with all the answers, but to use "prototypes" to learn by doing, to re-invest in promising efforts, establish a market niche, and later design tool and engineer to lower costs as production is rolled out. The R&D strategy does not presume that the answers are already there, but rather that an opportunity exists. The application of such an approach to disinvested

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Hall and Company, 1984, pp. 158-166. A second edition, published in 1994, contains slightly different conclusions.

[74] The National Center on Education and the Economy has made this point quite forcefully and posed two choices facing America's workforce: building greater skills among American workers or resigning the majority of the American workforce to lowering-wage jobs. See: The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!* Rochester, NY: National Center on Education and the Economy, 1991.

neighborhoods and unprepared parents would move away from the current social engineering, evaluation paradigm that tends to circumscribe innovation and reform.[75]

Many community and some state collaborations have enlisted business and financial leadership. This also is needed at the national level. This does not mean that the entire corporate world endorses reform, but it does mean that reformers from the service and community development fields develop allies and leaders from within that corporate world that recognize and embrace the vision for reform.

Expanding the Knowledge Base

While new connections are being made, a vision formed, and a grassroots base developed, we must admit to all that we do not know. Reform is not easy work; done wrong it can "do harm." There are many well-meaning programs and staff that produce little good. The required practice transformations -- in mainstream and more preventive systems of support -- are profound and difficult. This isn't rocket science -- it is much easier to guide an inert piece of metal through space than predictably guide and nurture human growth and social regeneration.

At the same time we push for reform, we must gain answers to some critical issues about how workers and programs can succeed. Table Five, drawn from earlier work,[76] poses some of the issues that the family support field must address. These are the "devil in the details." Many programs which espouse the practice mantra -- community-based, family-focused, asset-oriented, comprehensive -- fall short in realizing them. Similar lists can and should be applied to

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[75] Harold Williams discusses how this constitutes a major departure from current ways that government funds programs, and even innovations. His chapter on innovation ("Buying Programs, Buying Change") discusses the role of prototypes in furthering understanding and how they should, but usually fail to, be applied to public sector work. See: Williams, Harold. *Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking, Second Edition.* Rensselaerville, NY: Rensselaerville Institute, 1993.

[76] Bruner, Charles, "The Family Support Movement: What Is the Promise and How Can We Deliver On It?" *Georgia Academy Journal* (Spring 1995). pp. 1-4.

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Table
Issues and Operational Questions

ISSUE DESCRIPTION
Quality assurance in frontline practice and organizational structures that can manage complex and diverse family needs. The relationship between worker and family is the core of family support. This relationship is built on mutual respect and trust but also on providing guidance and support. Family Support services must be able to recruit, select, train, supervise, and support workers who can establish this relationship and provide appropriate support and guidance. Family support services must be consumer driven and able to respond holistically to complex and diverse family needs. Frontline workers cannot be expected to possess all the social skills needed, but the organization within which they work must be configure to facilitate access to needed expertise and resources.
Outreach to socially isolated, vulnerable, and disenfranchised families. One of the goals of family support is to succeed with families and children current systems fail. To succeed, family support services first need to reach and engage those families, who often are socially isolated, distrustful of formal support systems, and angry (repressed or expressed) about their treatment by society.
Community building strategies within family support. Family support can have both an individual and a collective impact, serving individual families and their needs and addressing and advocating for neighborhood and community needs. This requires that family support centers support collective, community activities. While family support services may begin with leadership and staffing from outside and neighborhood and community, the long-term goal may be to become a truly resident-directed and administered service system.
Role of family support in fostering economic opportunity. Ultimately, families and neighborhoods require economic opportunity to succeed. Family support services are most effective if they can help provide legitimate paths to economic well-being for families and neighborhoods currently outside the economic mainstream.

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Five
in Building Effective Systems of Family Support

CRITICAL OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS

Frontline worker quality

- What recruitment and hiring practices, including interviewing techniques, are most effective in hiring frontline workers with the orientation, aptitude, and skills needed to work effectively with families?
- How much can paraprofessional, "community workers" be employed to do this work? What additional supervision, training, and staff support is needed for these workers?
- How can services identify potential workers from within the neighborhoods served? How can this recruitment be managed to avoid unrealistic expectations within the community?

Organizational structures and strategies

- What ongoing monitoring and supervision, training, and staff development are needed to continually improve quality and to make promotion, corrective action, and termination decisions?
- What "tables of organization" and "lines of authority" work best? How much can frontline worker teams be blended to capitalize on diverse expertise and professional backgrounds?
- How much access should frontline workers have to other resource brokers who work more continuously with other community service providers?

Other issues

- How much can "volunteers" provide services and supports within a family support system, and what are the limitations and concerns in using "volunteers"?
- How can family support services that use a curriculum base (e.g., parenting education, child abuse prevention, health care and nutrition of newborns) assure that their efforts respond holistically and beyond the curricular focus?
- How can family support services reach out to and serve young men, fathers, and significant others? What are the strengths and limitations of family support in addressing such issues as substance abuse and domestic violence?

- What techniques and tools are most successful in engaging "hard to reach" families? In doing home visits? In sponsoring community events and soliciting community comment?
- How can services determine when activities cross the line from being "creative and persistent" in engaging families to being "intrusive"?
- What roles can "community workers" play in this process and what roles should be played by others?

- How can family support services develop strong Boards that are representative of the neighborhoods and communities they serve? How can these Boards effectively represent neighborhood interests within the larger community?
- What mobilization activities can family support services undertake to meet community needs? How can services help residents succeed in "first step" efforts (neighborhood watches and community policing; recreational programs for youth; parenting support groups) to address identified neighborhood needs?
- What strategies can family support services undertake to increase the level of social capital in their communities?
- How can family support services convert from being neighborhood-based to being neighborhood-designed and administered? What capacity needs to be developed in this process? What strategies do directors need to take to provide for such transitions to resident ownership?

- What connections and collaborative activities can be established between family support programs and grassroots community economic development efforts? What are effective ways to link family support with community development corporations, entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise development activities, and other organizational efforts supporting community economic development?
- How can family support services be strategic employers and provide employment and career development opportunities for neighborhood residents? To what extent can family support programs establish career ladders for their programs and links to other public service employment?
- How can family support services help create "work readiness" among individuals currently without that work readiness? How can these services provide a bridge to employers and employment?
- As family support centers represent geographic points for new activity, how can these centers serve as "incubators" for entrepreneurs to develop new services and economic activity?

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other professional fields, and to organizing and community development work.

This knowledge-building does not need to start from scratch, with new demonstration projects and experimental designs. Indeed, exemplary programs and initiatives have produced at least proximate answers to many of the questions that must be addressed. Yet we must do a much more concerted and critical job in collecting these lessons from the field. Not every program with dreams can make them a reality. Not every reform within a mainstream institution produces any meaningful change. We cannot simply say, "We know it when we see it," particularly if different persons see different things. We have to be able to distinguish the conditions that make things work from those that do not.

There may be no model that we wish to place above others for communities to embrace, nor a process or structure for decision making and governance that guarantees success. Yet we need a disciplined approach that recognizes success, as well as ineffectiveness. Without this knowledge base, we cannot produce the type of movement and support we need.[77]

The task in this knowledge development is not only with the field of practitioners, but with those in the research and policy community who

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[77] In 1994, Tom Urban, then CEO of Pioneer Hybrid International, a Fortune 500 company, agreed to chair a committee on "outcomes" for an Iowa proposal to dramatically expand family support in the state. He quickly drew the committee to focus on the question, "How can we tell if workers are succeeding with families?" If one could answer that question, he contended, one eventually could work back to broader community outcome goals, although the path might be complex. If one could not find a way of determining whether workers are successful, however, one could never build a real set of effective programs. Urban likened it to his own sales force, which, like a family support worker, must build relationships with customers and contour approaches to meet their needs. His business needs a discipline to insure that the workforce is successful, which means a system for recruiting, selecting, training, supervising, and monitoring them. It also means a system, when necessary, for terminating workers who don't perform. Clearly, it is easier to establish "outcomes" for sellers of seed corn than for supporters of family growth and development, but the complexity of the task does not diminish its importance. Failing to address Urban's questions not only will diminish the likelihood that successful programs (and their workers) will be replicated elsewhere, it also will diminish the likelihood of ongoing support from the new partners who inevitably will be raising such questions.

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have followed along. Too little field-based work has been performed. Too little work has been conducted to synthesize the lessons from the field on these "devils in the details" (and in the footnotes).

Committing to Work Together, Intensively, and for the Long Haul

The causes of this country's, and its children's, predicament did not occur overnight and they will not be resolved overnight. Generational issues do not lend themselves to solutions within election cycles. The challenges are long-term and should be seen as such.

To this end, there are several shifts in the manner in which we support reforms that I believe should be addressed -- one related to the technical assistance and support we provide to those working diligently toward reform, another related to the way we support reforms in the public sector, and a third related to the manner in which we assess progress. If not paradigm shifts, they are at least the exception to the current way we do business.

Technical assistance. To achieve results will require commitment at the grassroots, community, and state levels from those involved in the day-to-day development and implementation of reforms. Those leaders, however, cannot be expected always to invent it on their own. They deserve technical assistance and support that brings the best thinking and experience to bear on their cutting edge work. This requires a form of support and technical assistance that is flexible, individualized, comprehensive, community-based, asset-oriented, seamless, and timely. It requires intensity and duration of involvement, a long-term commitment that most national technical assistance providers do not now provide. It requires a much better coordination of the technical assistance that is offered, avoiding mixed messages that can overwhelm sites receiving advice from all directions. [78]

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[78] The New Futures Project, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides good lessons on this point. The number of people visiting sites and offering advice does not necessary "add up" to what sites need to move forward. Developing a good match between site and technical assistance provider is not easy; sites often do not know what to ask for and technical assistance

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It is easy for those in demand to spread themselves "too thin." If those most in demand cannot provide the type of continuity and intensity of support communities and states need, however, there must be strategies to develop new people who can assume that role.

Public sector administrative support. Successful reforms will require administrative leadership from persons within existing public systems in changing the character of their systems.[79] School superintendents, state agency and division directors, county human service administrators, city managers and housing directors, and many other public employees must lead reforms within their own professional systems and across them to other systems. This requires a commitment from the "best and brightest" to stay at their jobs, which often do not reward such work, either financially or symbolically. If champions are to be retained within the public sector to establish continuity in reform, some of the financial and symbolic rewards to keep them there must be provided from outside the public systems themselves.

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providers may not be perceptive enough to ferret it out. On the New Futures experience, see: Center for the Study of Social Policy. *Building New Futures for At-Risk Youth: Findings from a Five Year, Multi-Site Evaluation.* Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1995. Another perspective on the same initiative is found in: Annie E. Casey Foundation. *The Path of Most Resistance: Reflections on Lessons Learned from New Futures.* Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995.

On developing a good match between technical assistance provider and site, see: Bruner, Charles. *So You Think You Need Some Help? Making Effective Use of Technical Assistance.* Falls Church, MD: National Center for Service Integration, 1992. For views of technical assistance providers on what makes for good and bad practice, see: Scott, Stephen, and Karon Perlowski. *Moving from Art to Craft: Conversations with Technical Assistance Providers on Building Capacity to Assist Comprehensive, Cross-System Reforms.* Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1994.

[79] This does not mean that the primary thrust for reform will come from within the systems that need to change. This is why major emphasis in this paper is placed upon developing a grassroots movement of new practitioners who often have worked outside the existing system (and frequently in conflict with it). In fact, a strong argument can be made that public systems do not transform themselves willingly or quickly; that innovation and change occurs first from outside the system. Some would argue that old systems never change; they eventually "wither away" and are replaced by new systems that have demonstrated their superiority. Such is the essence of Schumpeter's "theory of creative destruction" (albeit this only occurs with substantial political and economic support). See: Schumpeter, J.A. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy.* New York, 1947. It still seems logical, however, to support those within public systems that are seeking to hasten change and reform and introduce new practice.

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Assessing progress. We must be disciplined in seeking answers and continuously assessing the effects of what we have done. At the same time, the social engineering paradigm is not the one that we should take to assess our work.

We are seeking to learn as we experiment, not test a pre-determined intervention against a circumscribed effect.[80] Our methodology must not discount the fact we cannot always discern statistically measurable effects.[81]

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[80] According to Norman Polansky, the movement in psychology to "projected experiments" as the true evaluative framework was a fairly recent one and not always in the best interests of advancing scientific knowledge. As caveats on embracing control groups as the only means for advancing knowledge, Polansky provides the following:

> An early inkling that evaluation is not always invaluable came from one of my mentors, Fritz Redl. Redl was a Vienna-trained child analyst who had focused in this country on group treatments of ego-disturbed children. ... Redl was imaginative and dedicated, and extended analytic theory in new directions. Our project [was from] the National Institute of Mental Health. Yet, when Redl wanted to apply for a later grant, he came up against a newly erected wall. The applicant was now asked not only whom he wanted to treat, but what precisely the treatment would be, and by what designed it would be evaluated so that one could tell whether it differed for those not so treated. ...
>
> Redl's complaint was completely appropriate. He needed funding for a free-wheeling project in which he would try to find ways of approaching heretofore unreachable children. But, the granters -- who knew little about the substance of his work, but found great security in the irrefutable logic of design -- wanted him to state in advance what he would learn. Asked Redl, "If I already know how to treat these kids, why would I be asking for support in order to find out?" ...
>
> If one is not absolutely convinced from clinical experience that a treatment works, there is seldom any point in subjecting it to large-scale testing via a projected experiment. In most areas touched by social work, it seems to require a strong effect to overcome the measurement error inherent in the instruments we have available. ...
>
> It is of more than passing interest that, when social work research was younger, evaluative designs did not routinely include control groups. This was not a matter of ignorance; their absence was not without a rationale. For instance, it was said, "The client is his own control." Which meant, without treatment, the client could not be expected to move, but would probably deteriorate further. Therefore, any improvement found could safely be attributed to the intervention. It seems still worth bearing in mind that this is usually not a silly presumption.

Polansky, Norman. *Historical Perspectives on Evaluative Research* (draft paper).

[81] This is one of the dangers of moving to "outcomes" as a mechanism for accountability. Often, we confuse lack of finding statistical significance with absence of effect. That sometimes can be the result of the power of the test, particularly when applied to relatively "weak" interventions. See: Bruner, Charles (with Stephen Scott). *Thoughts on Statistical and Substantive Significance -- Are We Selling Programmatic Efforts Short?*, Occasional Paper #20.

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The approach to assessment in innovative and entrepreneurial activities is different from the approach to assessment of those seeking to replicate prior successful efforts.[82] Above all, we must not be intimidated by the current scientific approach, but seek to construct a scientific approach appropriate to our work.[83]

Getting to There From Here

While the challenges raised here may seem daunting, I do not believe they are impassible. The past eight years have seen dramatic growth in reform efforts and a much deeper understanding of the importance of taking on this task. Leaders in community efforts around the country have shown their willingness to continue to push forward and to make generational commitments to reform. Many seeds have been planted. There is greater readiness for a bolder and more inclusive vision than when *Within Our Reach* came out.

I believe many of us have come to the same general conclusions presented in this paper. If there is another path to move concertedly to "succeed with children current systems fail," it certainly has eluded me.

This does not mean that everyone has to take all steps at once, but rather that each of us works to better recognize the path and our responsibilities in clearing it. In *The Golden Notebook*,[84] Doris Lessing mentions "the power of naïvetè." That is a prerequisite to changing what is today, to suspending disbelief.

This may also seem like speaking to the choir. In the end, however, I think it should be looked at as exhortations to the choir: to speak

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Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center, 1996.

[82] Williams, Harold, *op. cit.*, provides a good description of this difference. What one is looking for when one is testing new ground is different than what one is looking for in expanding over proven territory.

[83] This is, of course, the nature of a paradigm shift. See: Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

[84] Lessing, Doris. *The Golden Notebook*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.

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louder, with better harmony, a richer set of voices, a clearer melody. Each of these requires more work -- more work together and more work with others whom we do not yet know or share as much.

If we are to achieve more success in the next eight years, we have to be more visible and contribute to a real movement toward reform. The unfortunate thing about Robert Kennedy's words are that they have not been the source of public dialogue and debate, since the time they were stated more than a quarter century ago. The task is clearly before us to start that dialogue and to help nourish the nascent movement toward reform. Some of our most vulnerable children will not endure the current "modest proposals" being considered at the federal, and at many state levels. We need to construct the alternative. In the end, who else but ourselves can we expect to commence this work?

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Postscript

A weaving motion in the sky made him turn his eyes upward; he saw a slender streak of billowing white blooming against the deep blue. The plane was writing high up in the air.
"Look!" Bigger said.
"What?"
"That plane writing up there," Bigger said, pointing.
"Them white boys sure can fly," Gus said.
"Yeah," Bigger said, wistfully. "They get a chance to do everything. I could fly one of them things if I had a chance."
Gus pulled down the corners of his lips, stepped out from the wall, squared his shoulders, doffed his cap, bowed low and spoke with mock deference:
"Yessuh."
"You go to hell," Bigger said, smiling.
"Yessuh."
"I could fly a plane if I had a chance," Bigger said.
"If you wasn't black and if you had some money and if they'd let you go to that aviation school, you could fly a plane," Gus said.
For a moment, Bigger contemplated all the "ifs" that Gus had mentioned. Then both boys broke into hard laughter, looking at each other through squinted eyes.
"It's funny how the white folks treat us, ain't it?"
"It better be funny," Gus said.
"Maybe they right in not wanting us to fly," Bigger said. "Cause if I took a plane up I'd take a couple of bombs along and drop 'em sure as hell...."[85]

It is difficult to receive comments and critiques after producing and delivering a paper in which one has invested considerable time and effort. One gentle but unmistakable critique was that the paper was

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[85] Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940. Quote from pp. 19-20 of 1966 Perennial Classics edition.

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"color blind" and did not adequately reflect the power of institutional racism in our society, with an impact that includes but is not reflected solely in economic disadvantage or social class.

This is a fair critique. I acknowledge, in this respect, that the paper is incomplete. The tragedy in *Native Son* is reflected in the above vignette very early in the book. The subsequent events are simply its unfolding. That tragedy is one of blocked aspirations and racial oppression. Too many youth in inner-city communities of color have similar conversations today that are just as real as those in 1940, the date *Native Son* first came to print. People of color in America all share, in some measure, a recognition that this oppression touches their own lives, or others close to them. The building of a national vision and a grassroots base must have a commitment, at its core, of helping to end this institutional racism. In the development of both vision and grassroots base, we must model the behavior that we preach.

The paper also is incomplete in another important respect. While it addresses the question, "How can we succeed with children that current systems fail?," it does not speak to the growing stress and anxiety of the working class. In many respects, the last quarter century represents a tale of three, rather than two, trends. One trend is certainly those who have fallen farther behind, disproportionately children of unprepared parents and from disinvested communities. A second trend is those who have enjoyed increasing affluence, whose skills and credentials have enabled them to enjoy higher earnings and construct their gated communities, figuratively if not literally.

A third trend is of those whose work ethic and aspirations endure but whose skills and credentials have not risen and whose real wages have declined. This working class has retained its standard of living by delaying marriage, having smaller families, having both spouses in the workforce, and going into debt. The anxiety within this class can produce intolerance and hostility to those seen as threats from below to their economic security. At a minimum, the political system has been too slow to address the needs of this working class for such basic goods as affordable and accessible child care, medical care, and living wages. Perhaps this is, in part, because the hostility of this

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group rarely is directed to those above, and more often directed to those below.

Ultimately, if the actions suggested in this paper are to occur, these two issues, themselves intertwined, must be recognized and addressed -- both because they are socially just, and because they are needed to construct the base of support for this necessary work.

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Commentary
by Otis Johnson*

Charles Bruner is right to acknowledge that the paper, "Realizing a Vision for Children, Families, and Neighborhoods," does not speak directly to the issue of race and the role it plays in determining who is economically disadvantaged and the opportunities for upward mobility in the American social system. This is a frequent omission in the analysis of well-meaning persons in the public policy arena.

Discussion of race and racism in American life makes many people very uncomfortable. Yet race and class, like politics and economics, are inextricably linked. A discussion of their importance and relationship is similar to the chicken and egg argument when it comes to talking about which one is most important in determining outcomes for children and families of color.

A good, comprehensive community building strategy takes into account the challenges of working with both race and class issues that impact the quality of life for residents of targeted geographical areas. The economically deprived areas that are struggling to rebuild their communities are disproportionately communities of color, as the statistics Bruner presents for Allegheny County illustrate so unmistakably. The conditions of these areas depend heavily on the economic and political interests of power brokers who are generally of a difference race and class from the people in the target neighborhoods.

Bruner does a good job of describing how a social service and family support strategy needs to be coupled with an economic one. However, racism remains a fundamental barrier to the fair distribution of resources and opportunities to implement good social service and family support strategies as well as offer economic opportunity. To

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* Otis Johnson participated in the Carter Center Leadership Symposium and was one of a number of participants stressing the need to include discussions of race and racism in any analysis of economic and social disadvantage. He agreed to provide a brief commentary to the paper.

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successfully rebuild disinvested communities, there must be a focus on race and class-based public policy in all fields of action, and the value judgments that drive those decisions.

Bruner also is right to indicate that there is growing stress and anxiety in the working class. They are falling farther behind as the middle-class gets flattened and the gap between rich and poor widens. He is right about the anxiety of the working class who see themselves as working harder and having less. Racists and politicians are exploiting this stress and anxiety for their selfish purposes. This situation increases the danger of misplaced aggression that manifests itself in racial intolerance and hostility.

I applaud Bruner's willingness to acknowledge his omission and recognize the need for corrective action. At the beginning of this century, W.E.B. Dubois told us in *The Souls of Black Folk* that race would be a major problem. He was right, and as we move toward the next century race will remain a major problem for this society.

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WORKING PAPERS

- *Beyond the Buzzwords: Key Principles in Effective Frontline Practice*. Jill Kinney, Kathy Strand, Marge Hagerup, Charles Bruner. 1994.

- *Steps Along an Uncertain Path: State Initiatives Promoting Comprehensive, Community-Based Reform*. Charles Bruner, Deborah Both, Carolyn Marzke. 1996.

POLICY PAPER

- *Realizing a Vision for Children, Families and Neighborhoods: An Alternative to Other Modest Proposals*. Charles Bruner, with foreword by Douglas Nelson and commentary by Otis Johnson. 1996.

RESOURCE BRIEFS

1. *So You Think You Need Some Help? Making Effective Use of Technical Assistance*. Charles Bruner. 1992.
2. *Charting a Course: Assessing a Community's Strengths and Needs*. Charles Bruner, Karen Bell, Claire Brindis, Hedy Chang, William Scarbrough. 1993.
3. *Who Should Know What? Confidentiality and Information Sharing in Service Integration*. Mark I. Soler, Clark M. Peters. 1993.
4. *Getting to the Bottom Line: State and Community Strategies for Financing Comprehensive Community Service Systems*. Charles Bruner, Frank Farrow. 1993.
5. *Getting Started: Planning a Comprehensive Service Initiative*. Carolyn Marzke, Deborah Both. 1994.
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OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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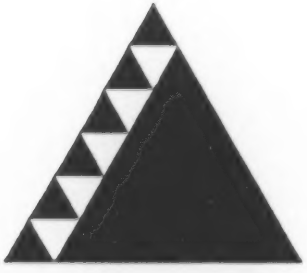

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